

















# HEROD ANTIPAS;

SEQUEL TO

Herod the Great,

WITH PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF

*Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.*

ALSO,

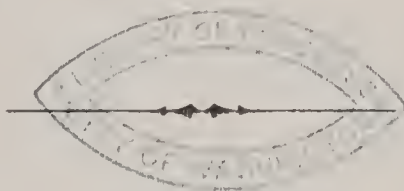
Sketches of Contemporary History,

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RESIDENCE OF

TIBERIUS CÆSAR ON THE ISLAND OF CAPREÆ.

~~~~~  
BY WILLIAM M. WILLETT.  
~~~~~

"Compared to the possession of that priceless treasure and happiness unspeakable, a PERFECT FAITH, what has Life to offer?"—THACKERAY.



NEW YORK:

1866.





## DEDICATION.

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THE WRITER DESIRES TO DEDICATE THIS WORK TO THE

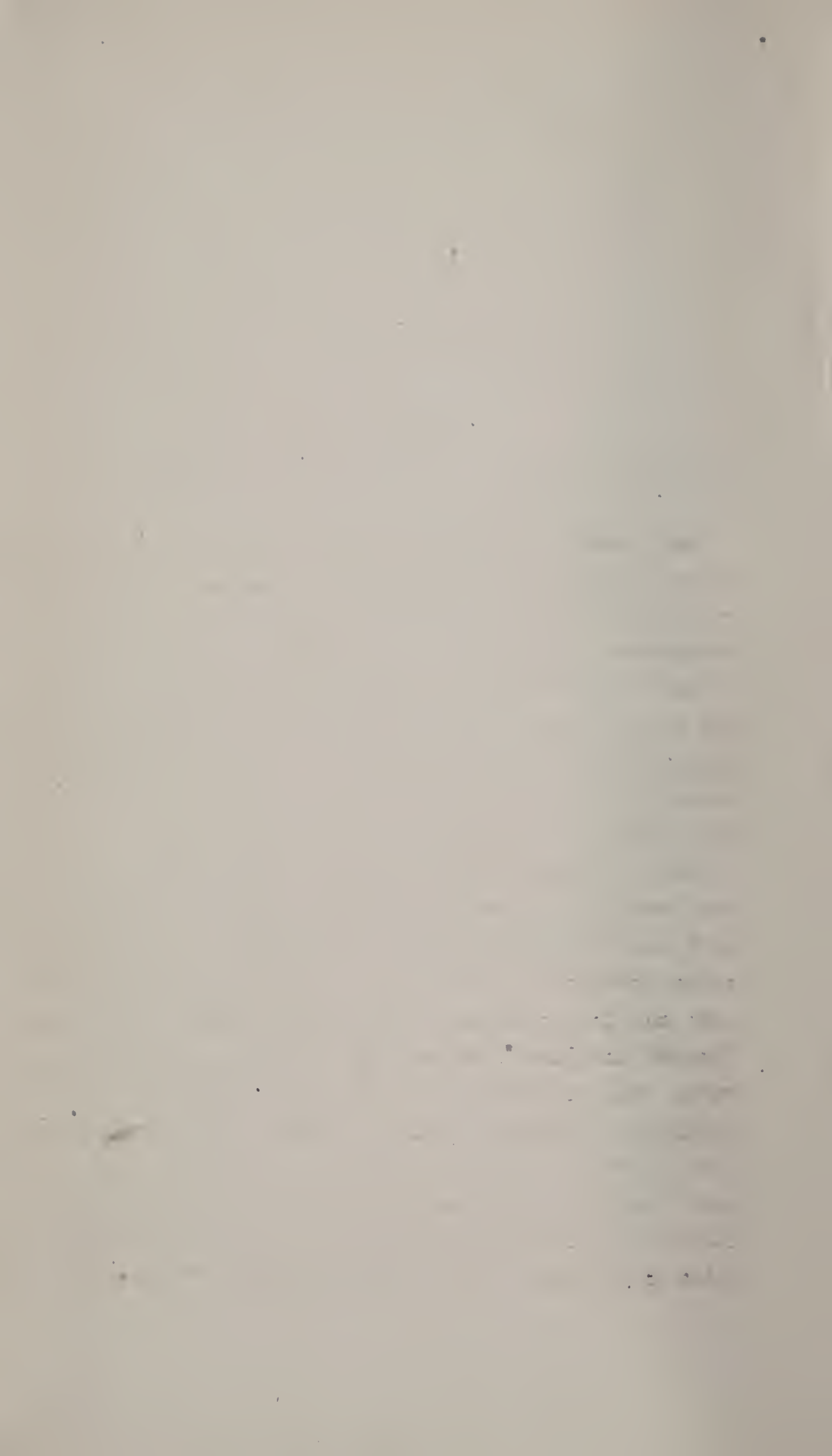
REV. HENRY J. FOX,

(Of the Central M. E. Church of the 7th Avenue.)

He would fain thus express the sense he has of his kindness, and the high esteem in which he holds his distinguished pulpit talents. May he himself have in his own soul a realization of the fact that Christ died, and rose again, and with invincible power from above, as well as cogency of argument, impress these ever-living truths upon the minds of his hearers.

With a deep sense of obligation, and with true regard, with an earnest desire for his happiness and usefulness in the ministry, the writer begs of Mr. Fox to accept this testimonial of his regard and friendship.

W. M. WILLETT.





## PREFACE.

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THE present work, Herod Antipas, is the Sequel to Herod the Great. This was published some five years ago; the press, both secular and religious, spoke well of it, and the writer has been encouraged to issue a second volume.

This book proceeds on the same general plan as the other; the current events of Roman history are placed side by side with those of Jewish history, and both are made in some measure to concentrate in Christ, and to illustrate and confirm his mission to our world. His youth and manhood are brought before the reader in connection with the times in which he lived, himself the great central figure of the group. Beside him on the canvas, amid the shifting scenes, how small appear the figures of other actors, however high their station, or important the parts which they may have performed in the world's drama of that period. Granted that Christ lived, and all the facts of his history, interwoven with the records of those days, follow of course. To exclude the supernatural from his history is to exclude the sun from the world, and to say that there is no sun. The one is about the same as the other, equally as wise and philosophical. There is a living history of Christ in every man's heart who believes in his name; and, like the pyramids of the desert, this

history speaks for itself, rising high and grand on the lonely waste of life, attesting his miraculous birth, and all the miracles that encircle his name.

With the general narrative is interwoven more or less reference to the greatest of all human events in the world's history—the reinstatement of the Jewish nation. This, the writer, without going out of his way, aims to keep more or less before the mind of the reader.

The Christ of history, the Christ of this book, sustains a two-fold relation to that most remarkable people. He was "set," we are told,\* "for the FALL and rising again of many in Israel." That fall is an historical fact, illustrated by the national declension and dispersion; and the prophecy is yet to be completed, in the future rising and restoration. Jesus, however despised by that nation, is to stand for an ensign of God's chosen people.† The Jews are yet to regain their own land, and to take a foremost stand among the nations of the earth; but it will be through the Messiah, and this Messiah is "Jesus of Nazareth."

WM. M. WILLETT.

NEW YORK, April, 1866.

\* Luke ii. 3.

† Isaiah xi. 10.

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# HEROD ANTIPAS.

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## Book First.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### ARCHELAUS.

IN the commencement of the preceding volume we mentioned the prediction of Menahem, one of the sect of the Essenes, as related by Josephus, the Jewish historian, foreshadowing the elevation of Herod, son of Antipater, to the throne of Judea.\* Herod was a boy at the time, and on his way to school when the strange incident occurred. Strange as it was the prediction came to pass; and by concurrence of extraordinary circumstances Herod was raised, to use the words of the historian, “from a private man to a king;” and after a long life checkered by vicissitudes, he transmitted his kingdom unimpaired to three of his sons,—Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip.

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\* Jos. Antiq. Book 15. chap. 10. sec. 5.

To Archelaus, his eldest surviving son, he bequeathed, strictly speaking the kingdom of Judea.

Herod died in his palace at Jericho. Here he drew his last expiring breath; and, what is to be noted, in the immediate vicinity of that fair sheet of water in which the youthful high priest, Aristobulus, the brother of his wife Mariamne, was drowned by a select band of soldiers, as if in sport, and by accident, but in reality by the secret contrivance of the jealous tyrant. From this hour he never knew peace,—consumed at the close of life by an incurable and noisome disease, racked by pain without a moment's interval of ease: at times alarming the palace by his loud and agonizing cries. It is probable also that he was haunted by the memory of his first crime; and that the spectre of his murdered brother-in-law, with his flowing locks, and face of almost more than mortal beauty appeared before his distempered vision. At last death closed the conflict; upon a golden bier, embroidered with various precious stones, the cold, lifeless body was placed; the bier and the body were "covered over with purple;" a sceptre was put in his right hand, a diadem on his brow, and a crown on his head.\* All was still throughout the long corridors of the palace; it was as if its halls were empty; the wind whistled through the groves of myrtle and orange low and mournfully, and even the fountain played as in unison with the solemn scene. Death had entered the palace; he had affixed his signet on gateway, banqueting-room and terrace; and

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\* Jos. Ant. Book 17. chap. 3. sec. 8.

for a while he meant to hold high festival in the gar-nished chambers of the rich and great: to put his me-mentos in the houses even of kings.

Salome, the sister of Herod, with Alexis her husband were the first to move. Before the death of Herod was known they released those that had been confined in the Hippodrome or Circus; and dismissed them in safety. Herod had ordered the principal men of the nation to assemble at Jericho; they were seized and put in con-finement in the Hippodrome, while he required of his sister and her husband that as soon as the breath left his body they should be put to death. This he did from a feeling of revenge, and to be mourned when he should die. It has so much the look of insanity, of a furious frenzy which had seized his mind, that, with all his crimes we are disposed to impute the mandate to a species of madness, and to cover this last wild act with the mantle of charity.

And now Archelaus makes his appearance. He was present at the death of his father; as were also his brothers and other members of the family. The sol-diers were collected in the ampitheatre; and when Archelaus supported by Salome and her husband en-tered, he was received with acclamations; a letter from Herod to the different bands was read, thanking them for their fidelity, and recommending Archelaus. Ptolemy, who had the king's seal, read the will. The whole was, for the present, satisfactorily arranged. The sol-diers would have had Archelaus assume the diadem at

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\* Antiq. Book I. chap. 13. sec. 9. Jewish War, Book I. chap. 13. sec. 8.

once; but he refused until the testament of his father should be confirmed by Cæsar.\*

The funeral follows. Herodium is the place of sepulture, a short distance from the city of Jerusalem; a city built by Herod\* to commemorate his victory over the Parthians and Antigonus; and, on this account, as we judge, it was chosen as a suitable site for his family mausoleum. Close to the bier walked his numerous relations; next in order came the bands of soldiers; first his body guard, then the Thracians, then the Galatians: five hundred attendants bearing spices closed the long funeral procession. By the narrow defile that leads from Jericho to Jerusalem,—along which the army of Pompey once marched on its way to besiege the holy city,—with the sound of music, banner lowered and sword reversed—the cortege slowly moved. Emerging from the dark, overhanging defile their route lay southward, leaving to the right Jerusalem, with its gates, walls, towers and battlements, and the Temple glittering as molten silver in the sunshine: soon Herodium appears in sight, built on a hill, and adorned with a palace: gardens encircle the base of the mount on which it stands. Never was Herod in so great extremity as at that particular crisis of his life when he fought and gained the battle which the city called after his own name immortalized; and where now his remains were deposited in hope, according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, of the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps, as the scene closed, and the mausoleum received his

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\* Cæsar Augustus.



body, divested of the splendid trappings of the burial—the descending sun may have shone forth in its glory, to be succeeded, after the transient twilight, by night—emblem of the evanescent nature of human grandeur.

The solemn ceremony ended, Archelaus returned to Jerusalem; and after the seven days of mourning were completed, he gave a great funeral feast, according to the custom—more honored in the breach than in the observance—of the Jews. Then he went up to the Temple, arrayed in a white garment, seated himself on a throne erected in the court of Israel, and addressed the people, assembled in large numbers within the sacred courts. Pleasure sat on every face; all rejoiced that the reign of Herod was over, and hoped that the son would do better than the father. Archelaus himself was much gratified by the applause with which he had been received on the road, and as he entered the city and proceeded to the magnificent palace on Zion's hill,—as also on this day when he came to the Temple. The people had thronged the streets, lined the thoroughfares, blocked up the magnificent causeway that connected the hill of Zion with Mount Moriah, and as Archelaus passed along from the palace to the temple they had rent the air with shouts. Archelaus spoke to the people with soft, persuasive words, but in a general way; he did not give specific promises until reminded by his listeners. They loudly asked to be eased of their taxes; also for the release of political prisoners, and “that he would take off the duties upon commodities”—the goods that were publicly sold and bought in the city. To these requests—rather demands—he as-



sented, solicitous to keep the good will of the multitude, at least until Augustus should confirm his father's will. Having thus received the sanction, not only of the soldiery, but of the people, Archelaus offered sacrifice to God, agreeably to the custom of the Jews; God was thus acknowledged as the sovereign ruler of the nation; God was the true source of power, and government must be administered in conformity with His will. The Jewish polity, truly divine, was based upon this idea.

Elate with his reception, and pleased, on the whole, with what had transpired,—happy to find the people in good humor,—Archelaus returned to the palace; the semblance of mourning was laid aside; lights shined in portico and hall; a splendid entertainment was prepared for his friends. Of the guests, there were Salome and Alexis, Philip, his favorite brother, Ptolemy, one of his father's chief friends, perhaps Herod Antipas, Herod Philip, with Rufus and Gratus, two of his principal officers, with other commanders of his army, and chief men of his household. It was said that Archelaus feasted some friends privately on the very night of the day in which his father died; this may, or may not have been. The charge was made by Antipater, the son of Salome, before Augustus. On the present occasion Archelaus did not deem it important to make even a pretence of grief. The scene was gay; the wine cup went round; and Archelaus supposed that the chief difficulties were already overcome—more readily perhaps than he had feared—knowing as he did the uncertain and easily excited mood of the people.

The day was not destined to end as favorably as it

began. There was a large body of the Jews in the city wholly opposed to Herod and his family; they would prefer even the government of the Romans. There were those who, if they must have a monarchy, chose Herod Antipas to his brother; Archelaus it was feared, would prove as cruel and as tyrannical as his father. There were those also who deeply resented the execution of the young men who a short time before, had at mid-day from a false zeal pulled down the golden eagle from the gate of the temple, which Herod had dedicated to God. The case was this.

There were two celebrated doctors in Jerusalem, Judas and Matthias, who incited their scholars to the act. They spoke of it as a pious deed; and for which it would be commendable to die. A report of the death of the king having reached the city, a large number of young men came together; the eagle was pulled down, and cut into pieces with axes. Some forty of them were taken with the "authors of this bold attempt," and were put to death. The people disclaimed any participation in what had been done; and allowed that those concerned were guilty of sacrilege toward God. The high priest, whose name also was Matthias, was deprived of his office, "as in part an occasion of this action;" and Joazar was appointed to fill his place.\* The zealots of this party, toward the evening of the day on which Archelaus had spoken in the temple, and while he feasted his friends, came to the palace: they were soon joined by crowds of the people; and the

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\* Ant. Book 17. chap. 6. sec. 2, 3, 4.7

hilarity of the feast was interrupted by demands for vengeance on all who acting officially had taken part in the death of the two teachers, Judas and Matthias, and their scholars, as men unjustly condemned. They also clamored for the deposition of the new high priest, as a tool of Herod, and one unworthy to fill that high office. The multitude, moved by a sudden burst of passion, began to lament the death of teachers held in high repute and greatly beloved. The young men were mourned; the feelings spread; and ere long the whole city was moved. Had they been required to analyse their feelings they could not have done so. To destroy the eagle was not only an affront to the king, and a piece of sacrilege under the name of piety, but was a seditious procedure, and had it not been repressed would have produced the most serious results. When did passion listen to reason? The cry of grief and passion was not confined to the relatives and friends of the deceased, but was taken up by the people at large; it became an exceeding loud cry, so as to be "heard all over the city."\* The other causes of discontent had their effect; and Archelaus soon found that the strong arm of his father was needed to govern a people so moody—whose humor changed with every passing hour, and who, hardly conscious of what they really desired, were, especially at this period of their national existence, ever ripe for innovation. Their hearts were at fault; having as a people proved false in their allegiance to God they vainly looked for the correction or alleviation of

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\* Jewish War, book 1. chap. 2. sec. 2.

their ills to some change of government, instead of sincere repentance for their sins and amendment of life. Had they read the writings of their prophets, and profited by them, they would have found a speedy remedy for all the real or imaginary ills under which they labored. Neither did Archelaus know where to look for help: his education, partly Roman, partly Jewish, was defective. Though a Jew, he was not pious; he did not ask wisdom and strength of God.

For the present the people were content thus to show their grief. After awhile they returned to their homes, and the remainder of the night was passed without disturbance. But the spirit of disaffection was abroad. The concessions of Archelaus availed but little. To punish his father's friends he would not consent; but nothing short of this would satisfy the populace. They met in the squares, the temple; they would listen to no remonstrance; the passover was approaching, and the city was filled; the lamentations for Judas and Matthias grew louder; sedition became more rife. When ordered to disperse they refused. They attacked those who were sent to calm their passions, and exhort them to moderation; till at last Archelaus, fearing a general insurrection, brought up a large force, and in the fight that followed his soldiers slew three thousand men, and dispersed the rest. The festival was broken up, and by proclamation all were ordered to return to their homes. Archelaus refrained from acting with severity as long as it was possible to do so. A sort of madness possessed the people; blind to consequences, restless, stirred by passion, they acted with



no forethought, and rushed on madly to their destruction.

The sedition which almost without cause had assumed so threatening a form, having been quieted, Archelaus set out for Rome. In the course of several months the will of Herod was ratified by Augustus, and Archelaus returned to Judea. The land during this time had been the scene of war, tumult, insurrection. From one end to the other it was agitated, as the sea when moved by tempest, or as a forest shaken by the wind. All was commotion; wave followed wave; pent up passion burst forth as fire, sudden, violent, destructive.

Sabinus, governor of Syria, under Varus, (Quintilus Varus, who perished so miserably in Germany) president, was the cause of the first disturbance. Eager to enrich himself he hastened to Jerusalem, and oppressed the people to such a degree that they rebelled. The feast of pentecost brought great numbers to the city: there were Galileans, Idumeans, many from Jericho and Perea; these all joined and besieged Sabinus in his palace. A battle ensued, in which the Jews after a hard struggle were defeated. In the fight the magnificent cloisters of the temple, so recently completed, were burned. Many perished on both sides. Still the Jews continued the siege, dug mines, and would ultimately have overpowered Sabinus, had not Varus arrived with two legions from Syria, and with other auxiliary forces. The approach of Varus to Jerusalem with so large a force induced the Jews to disband; and Sabinus hastily leaving the city, Varus took command.

The war between the Jews and Romans was now soon closed. Some two thousand of those who were engaged in the insurrection were crucified.

Other disturbances arose. In Idumea two thousand disbanded soldiers fought with Achiabus, Herod's first cousin. Their object was probably plunder, and they thought the present interregnum favorable for success. Achiabus held them in check until aid arrived and they were put down. In Galilee, one Judas, son of Ezekias, a robber, whom Herod had subdued with great difficulty, collected a multitude of men of a profligate character, and made his name a terror by his horrible atrocities. Marching to and fro, he slew, burned, and laid waste. He called himself king, and having entered Sepphoris, the principal city of Galilee, took possession of the palace, and armed his followers with the weapons that were laid up in it. Varus defeated this body; and as Sepphoris had participated in this insurrection, or at least in some way favored Judas and his followers, he burned the city and sold the inhabitants for slaves.

A man by the name of Simon, to whose care Herod had committed great things, a man of superior talents, and of an aspiring mind, "elevated at the disorderly state of things," put a diadem on his head, set up himself also for king, and was supported by followers chiefly from Perea. He plundered and destroyed the palace at Jericho, and other residences of the late king. Gratus, one of the chief captains of Herod, attacked and defeated this body of men. Simon at first escaped, but was soon taken and slain.



There was yet another, who amid the general confusion, aspired to the high distinction of ruler of the land. This man's name was Ythronges, a shepherd by occupation, and he was supported by four brothers, who acted as his lieutenants. Their followers were very numerous. They made war both with the Romans and Jews. They kept together a long while, and acted with great barbarity. One by one they were overcome, each at the head of a separate body of men. One was subdued in a fight with Gratus, another with Ptolemy. Archelaus himself took the eldest prisoner; the last surviving brother voluntarily surrendered himself, upon the promise of Archelaus and oath to God to preserve his life.\*

At last the return of Archelaus from Rome, with full power to act, and with aid from the Romans, enabled him to heal these dissensions, to put down the seditious, and to restore order throughout Judea. Civil commotion having ceased, only the memory thereof, as a dark dream remained. A long period of peace followed, during which the way of the King of the East was prepared, and his great rule on our earth inaugurated.

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\* Jos. Book xvii. chap. x. sec. 4, 5, 6, 7.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SETTLEMENT IN NAZARETH.

IN the first year of the reign of Archelaus, the young child Jesus, with his parents, returned to the land of Israel. Probably a year or more was spent in Egypt. The voyage of Archelaus to Rome, his detention in that city, his return, occupied a number of months at least. Herod himself lived some time after the flight into Egypt; so that we may fairly set down two years as the period of the sojourn of the Son of Man in his adopted country. The land which Abraham visited when sorely pressed by famine—in which Joseph rose to great power—where God displayed signs and wonders—the land in which under the Ptolemies the Israelites were so signally favored,—was destined to become a place of refuge to David's appointed Son. Each link in the long chain must occupy its place; not one can be spared. The wrath of Herod is overruled, and the purposes of God are fulfilled. So it was when Joseph was sold into Egypt; a train was laid, a series of events following each other in regular order, by which the providence of God was to be vindicated, and his sovereignty asserted over the affairs of men. The cry of anguish in the pit went up to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and was answered when he fed with food his

father's family, found them a house in Goshen, and so opened the way for God to carry out in process of time his purpose to make of them a great nation. This prefigured a greater event; Israel bears the charmed name of the son of God; it is so used as a fond appellation, first applied at the deliverance of God's chosen people from bondage in Egypt. With greater force it is applied to the Son of Man,—that the prophecy of Hosea, spoken in a twofold sense, first of Israel, then of Christ, might be literally fulfilled—"Out of Egypt have I called my Son."\* It is all one plan; if, like Joseph's coat, of many colors, of many varied parts, yet forming a complete whole, and showing it to be a plan unique, in every respect distinguished for its unequalled superiority. A plan running like threads through all time, weaving its changeless purpose from the beginning even to the end. Like the great sheet of flame of the prophet, which as it burned folded in upon itself till all was in a blaze, lighting up the heavens with glory, so the different parts of God's plan of redemption take hold of one another; they work in an involved manner; they run into each other; they reflect light backward and forward, and in the end display the depth of the wisdom and power of God.

There is a sense in which the child Jesus is Israel. He embodies all the hopes of Israel; he is the sum and center of all their sacred writings. He is the tie by which they are bound together as a nation—the secret

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\* Hos. ch. xi. 1.

tie—subject of mystery to so many eyes. At his word they will awake from the deep sleep of ages, and experience a more wonderful deliverance than when rescued from Egypt, and reach a higher destiny in the future than at any time they have attained in the far back and eventful past.

The little company of three, the father, the mother, and the young child, two years of age, able to walk alone, had reached the southern border of Judea, or of Idumea, as it was then called. Here they seem to have paused awhile debating in their minds whether or not to return to Bethlehem, the lot of their inheritance, and the place of the child's birth. Archelaus had returned from Rome, and now ruled Judea. He had already, as history shows, a reputation for cruelty, and it might not be so safe to venture within his jurisdiction.

At present the whole land was before them, where to choose to dwell. There were few hindrances from civil commotion; Athronges and his brothers were not subdued, but they kept up a desultory warfare, carried on in the more remote parts: the other numerous pretenders to kingship had enjoyed their dignity but a little while, and had all perished. It is not at all unlikely that the knowledge of an expected king, looked for by all, had raised up recently so many pretenders to the crown; but their swift overthrow must have satisfied their followers that they had imposed on their credulity. They had passed away as a dream, they had vanished as smoke. How airy had been their hopes—how soon had their promises been falsified. Still there was ample



ground for the general expectation, and the true King was not far off.

Shall they return or not to the sacred spot whence they started? That is the proper patrimony of the house of David. A divine intimation, which came in the form of a dream, directed their return to the village of Nazareth; the village so honored of God, where Joseph and Mary were betrothed; where they had spent so many happy days—days of infancy and childhood—and amid whose surrounding hills Mary's faith in God was nurtured—a faith which like that of Abraham did not stagger at the promise through unbelief—which in the darkest hour, and amid impossibilities, led the holy virgin to give glory to God. Immediately they set out. They chose the most retired route, though it is very likely the scenes of tumult, war and bloodshed, which had lately, like so many waves passed over the land, had diverted attention from the prevalent rumors respecting the Messiah some two years before.

See them, after so long and unlooked for an absence on their journey back to Nazareth. What an event had since occurred. What a series of events. At last they descry the village, embosomed amid hills. There is the fountain to which the pitcher has been so often carried,—but a little way from the village,—and there are the trees near the fountain, under whose umbrageous shade Joseph and Mary have often sat. Is this the house where the parents of Mary lived when the angel made his appearance with the most astonishing announcement ever conveyed to human ears? It is an angel from Heaven that speaks! It is a youthful

maiden that mutely listens! Which is the room? Let me enter that room—let me tread that floor. How silent it is; how sacred. Here communication was opened with the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

A lamp burns there; it has been lit up from heaven. Will it ever go out? No; never. The parents re-enter the old abode with a joy inexpressible after their long, strange and eventful absence. They have with them the hope, the desire of nations; and when they review their way they see that every step which they have taken has been ordered by the Lord, and now they are safely home once more.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### DEPOSITION OF ARCHELAUS.

ARCHELAUS, under the title of Ethnarch, ruled Judea ten years. He rebuilt the royal palace at Jericho; he also built a city which he named after himself, Archelais. It was situated a few miles to the north of Jericho,\* and added to the attractions of the plain. He was evidently pleased, as was his father before him, with this region as a residence during part of the year, when the great heats of the valley did not prevail.

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\* Rob. Palestine vol. 2, p. 305.



The valley of the Jordan, at this point is broad, and was then fertile in the highest degree. It was well watered. The palm groves were numerous, and extended even to the banks of the Jordan. Delicious gardens were interspersed among the palm groves. The fig tree grew there and also the sycamore. There was heard the voice of the nightingale. Beside the palace Herod built a fortress called Cypros, after his mother; and erected yet other buildings which Archelaus enjoyed. Festive hours, we may be assured from his disposition, he spent here; perhaps rather pleased than otherwise to be thus far removed from the holy city. The fact that he lavished such large expense in reconstructing the palace which had been burned, and the erection of another city a short distance from Jericho, show, we think, the force of the attraction to this part of his ethnarchy. We may suppose him standing and surveying the workmen, listening to the sound of the hammer and the saw, as the marble pile rose from its ruins. All was activity then on this now solitary plain; of former sounds only the song of the nightingale is now heard by the traveler as he sits under a tree.\* Of the former fertility chiefly thorny shrubs remain.† In the time of Archelaus all was so different. The time is at hand when its fertility will revive, and the silence of the deserted plain will depart. God's truth and power will be made manifest; and the children of Israel and the Gentile too will sit down side by side under the shade of the palm tree.

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\* Rob. Pales. p. 282      † Ibid. p. 286.

Archelaus married Glaphyra, the widow of his ill-fated brother Alexander, having divorced his former wife Mariamne. Upon the death of her husband Glaphyra was sent back by Herod to Archelaus her father in Cappadocia together with the portion she had brought his son ; \* afterward she married Juba, king of Lydia : upon his death, listening to the proposal of Archelaus, she returned to Judea, and though contrary to the Jewish law, the marriage took place, which was destined to be not of long continuance.

When Archelaus returned from Rome he returned in anger. A deputation of Jews, consisting of fifty persons, was sent to Rome, to oppose Archelaus. Augustus gave them a hearing in the temple of Apollo, which he himself had built on the Palatine hill. It stood near the palace and the library. Here Augustus in the latter part of his life, occasionally, at least, met the senate. The deputation charged Archelaus with cruelty because by his order his soldiers assaulted and slew such numbers of Jews, and begged the emperor not to give them a second tyrant in the son. Piqued by the charge, irritated by the opposition, especially as he had already lightened so many of their burdens, Archelaus it is probable took his revenge upon this party. After awhile he grew more cruel and unjust ; both Jews and Samaritans turned against him. His treatment of his subjects was, we are told, “barbarous and tyrannical ;” † and this was the

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\* Antiq. book xvii. c. 1. s. 1.

† Antiq. book xvii. c. 13. s. 2.

more inexcusable as it is clear that the emperor had urged Archelaus to forget animosities and to govern with justice and moderation. He was promised if he did so additional favors; among others that he should receive the title of king. It is likely that Archelaus made fair promises; that he engaged to follow the example of the emperor, who for many years had pursued with the best results a kind and conciliatory policy.

Augustus was greatly displeased when he heard that Archelaus, forgetful of his promises, unmindful of his engagements, disregarding the advice he had received, and which the emperor had given as a friend of his father, had by his conduct incurred the displeasure "both of his brethren and the principal men of Judea and Samaria." Archelaus had in Rome a certain man, a steward, of the same name as himself, who saw to his interest in that city. This man was despatched in all haste to Judea. He arrived—found Archelaus feasting with his friends—and gave his message, which required his presence at Rome. Augustus did not punish him unheard. Angry as he was, he gave him a chance to clear himself. A sudden interruption to a feast was the verbal message which he received; for Augustus would not write to him. A dream which Archelaus had dreamed four nights before had given some foreshadowing of this misfortune; he saw in his sleep ten ripe ears of corn, "which ears, as it seemed to him, were devoured by oxen." The dream troubled him; Simon, of the sect of the Essenes, said that the ten ears of corn denoted ten years, and that the time of Archelaus' government was over. On his arrival in

Rome he was brought face to face with his accusers. Unable to clear himself of the charges against him, he was deprived of his government, his property was confiscated, and he was banished to Vienne, a city of Gaul. He lost his wife Glaphyra about the same time. She died suddenly. It is related of her that shortly before she died she saw her first husband, the youthful Alexander, in a dream. She embraced him with great affection; but he reproached her because she had married his brother, which was wrong in itself as well as contrary to the laws of Moses. Still their former affection was not forgotten by Alexander, who said that she would soon rejoin him in another state. Glaphyra having told the dream to her female companions, died in a few days.\* Archelaus, carrying with him painful memories, sensible that he had ruined himself, went alone into banishment—poor, unregretted. He received no more, we may well judge, than a just desert for his crimes. His deposition and banishment took place in the tenth year of his reign, and in the eighth year, according to the common reckoning, (in reality the twelfth) of the Christian era.

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\* Antiq. book xviii. ch. 17. sec. 2, 4.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FIRST ROMAN GOVERNOR (PROCURATOR) IN JUDEA.

AN important change now occurred in the government of Judea. The civil magistracy passed out of the hands of the Jews into those of the Romans; Judea became a Roman province, and was annexed to Syria. Cyrenius, (in latin Quirinius)\* a Roman senator who had been consul, was appointed president of Syria; and Coponius, a Roman of the equestrian order was appointed to act under him as governor of Judea. From this time "the power of life and death was taken out of the hands of the Jews."† Taxes were now levied directly by the Romans, though the "description and registration of every man's possession was made eleven years before by Sentius Saturninus."‡ These taxes occasioned considerable disturbance. There were Jews who thought it a violation of the law to pay taxes to a foreign king. One Judas, of Galilee, headed an insurrectionary party, doubtless imagining that he would have divine assistance in a cause that he thought was so good; but he was soon cut off, and his followers were all suppressed. At this juncture the high priest

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\* Publius Sulpitius Quirinius.

† Prid. Con. Part 2, An. 8.

‡ Ibid. An. 8.

Joazar, son of Boethus, used his good offices to induce the people to submit to what was unavoidable, and after awhile prevailed. For the present the disturbance subsided; but the notion that the Jews owed submission to none but God remained as a germ of future evil in some overheated minds, and led ultimately to that fatal war with the Romans which terminated in the destruction of the city and temple, and the ruin and dispersion of the nation. This dispersion—the scattering of this people over the earth—we see; we shall also see their return and re-establishment as a new nationality in their own land. The nation having acted a great part in former ages, will appear on the stage again, filling a wide space in the eyes of the world, and dispensing blessings to generations yet to come. On Zion's hill will the standard be unfurled that will bring all the world to Christ, the predestined King of the whole earth.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE VISIT TO THE TEMPLE.

THE reader will recollect that ten years have elapsed, at the important point of time which we have now reached, since the return from Egypt, and the settlement in Nazareth. The country had remained quiet during all this period, save the recent insurrection



which arose from the taxing; when that was over it returned to its former state of tranquility. The Jews submitted to the new order of things, and under the Romans the administration of government went on pretty much as before. The religious rites of the Jews were in no way interfered with; their solemn festivals were observed, and each year saw Jerusalem thronged with its votaries from every quarter of the world. By the transfer of their political constitution to the Romans, the "sceptre" had already begun "to depart from Judah, and a lawgiver from between her feet,"\* and a loud signal was thus given of the advent of the promised Messiah—designated as Shiloh. This was a significant fact; one fitted to arrest the attention. For the first time in their history as a nation (if we except the brief rule of Antiochus Epiphanes)† a foreigner exercised dominion over Judah proper; strange hands "administered justice according to the laws of Rome, and the power of life and death was taken from them, and placed in a foreign governor."‡ This was the beginning of the change; the entire political fabric was not overturned until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, sixty-two years from this date. Neither sceptre nor lawgiver has been found among them since;§ though the time is at hand when both will be restored and the question so long agitated between Jew and Gentile as to who is the Messiah will be finally decided.

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\* Gen. xlix. 10.

† Prid. Con. part ii. an. 8.

‡ Prid. Con. part ii. An. 8.      § Ibid.

While the ten years were passing, and important changes taking place, the child Jesus was growing up in Nazareth. These years had put their mark on the face of the child; he had now reached his twelfth year. The family as yet was unbroken—the mother and father were both alive.

Cyrenius, a Roman citizen of high dignity, it will be recollected, was the president of Syria, and Coponius was governor of Judea. As to the latter, either during this year or the next (he was governor but two years) of his administration, the Samaritan at the commencement of the feast of the passover insulted the Jews in a very malicious manner. It was customary during the feast to open the gates of the temple just after midnight; some Samaritans came privately to Jerusalem, bringing with them dead men's bodies, and as soon as the gates were opened they entered, and unseen threw them about in the cloisters. The Jews, as we may suppose, highly resented this sacriligious act, and "afterward excluded the Samaritans from the temple, which they had not used to do at such festivals."\*

By this time we may suppose that the cloisters which had been burned during the war raised by the cupidity of Sabinus between the Jews and the Romans, had been repaired. Archelaus, who had built a new city and called it after his own name—who had rebuilt in a more magnificent manner than before the royal palace at Jericho—we may be pretty sure did not neg-

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\* Antiq. book xviii. chap. 2. sec. 2.

lect to restore the cloisters. so essential to the beauty and finish of the temple. The time was ample to do this; and ere this year we may take it for granted that they were entirely completed.

There is yet another point to be noted. The insurrection that arose in consequence of the tax, brought Cyrenius from Syria to Jerusalem; and notwithstanding Joazar the high priest had done much to induce the people to submit to the tax, Cyrenius deposed him from that high office, and put in his place Annas, the son of Seth; who continued in the office several years. It was clear, indeed, that political power had departed from the nation when a foreign ruler could at his pleasure interfere with the succession of the high priesthood, and depose and appoint whom he pleased. Where was the sceptre of Israel now? During the subjection of the Jews to the Persians and Macedonians, as a rule, the high priest retained his office for life, and changes were not capriciously and arbitrarily made; now every year or so there was a new high priest. The sanctity of the office was thus invaded; and regard was paid to the office not as an ordinance of God but as an institution of man.

In the first year of the appointment of Annas, son of Seth, as high priest, not long after Coponius was made governor of Judea, and when Cyrenius was president of Syria. about four years before the death of Augustus Cæsar, the mother and the father, with the young child Jesus, made their appearance in the holy city.

The great annual festival of the passover brought the father and mother to the city, and on this occasion the

child accompanied them; thereby fulfilling the word of prophecy in relation to the present political condition of Judea.

The temple, recently rebuilt, and the cloisters repaired, was perfectly magnificent. The white marble of which it was built, highly polished, and the golden pinnacles, glittered in the morning sun. Having been raised to its original altitude by Herod, the temple could be seen far off in the country; and when first descried by worshippers as they approached the city awakened admiration. The cloisters encircled the temple on every side; those on the south side, called the royal cloisters, consisted of three walks divided by immense pillars with their capitals sculptured after the Corinthian order. Each walk of this portico was thirty feet wide, and the height was fifty feet. There were four rows of pillars; while "the roofs were adorned with deep sculptures in wood, representing many sorts of figures." The eastern portico was adorned with valuable and handsome gifts, "given by many kings in former times;" and round about the entire temple were fixed "the spoils taken from barbarous nations, which had been dedicated to the temple by Herod, with the addition of those he had taken from the Arabians."\*

Along with many of their neighbors, friends and kinsfolk—a large company—the young child came with his parents this memorable year to the feast of the passover. It was, as we may suppose, his first official public appearance in the temple. This child was Shi-

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\* Antiq. book xv. chap. 11. sec. 3.



loh, and by his arrival at this remarkable conjunction of events, fulfils prophecy, and shows the prevision of God over the affairs of men. He came at the very moment of time predicted so long before. Coponius himself leaving Cesarea, the usual residence of the governor, was probably in the city during the feast, and his presence, and that of this child,—or Shiloh,—were most significant facts; significant in an historical and prophetic sense. Since the Babylonian captivity the nation had advanced in prosperity; until within a few years it had stood firm, united; but from the coming of Shiloh, and the rule of the Romans, its downfall could be told by decades. The glory of the temple and the city was already passing away.

How little are the ways of God like those of men. The presence of a child determines the fate of a nation. He rides on the tide of events, but a guiding hand arranges all. Persons and things of apparently little importance in the eyes of men are all important in the eyes of God. He works often by means that men overlook or despise. This child, twelve years of age, who notices him? Of what weight is that boy in the eyes of the learned doctors of the law? What has his presence here at this time to do with the political constitution of Judea? Yet God had a long time ago said that the one event should be identified with the other, and here is proof of the same. God has his own plan for working good out of evil—for overruling evil for good; and the presence of this child at this time is part of this plan. He has long since determined that the Jews shall be the chief instruments in his hands of



salvation to our world; and this child is the son of David, the son of Abraham. The purposes of God for our world vest in the *promise* made to Abraham, and thence in a direct line backward through them to Adam. Do you imagine through all the seeming delay that God has forgotten his promise, and that he has ceased to remember his word? Two thousand years or more are but a short time in his sight; and yet Jacob in dying saw the very political contingency that had now occurred. To make the thing more apparent, to unite it with the thread of history so that it could not be disentangled, Rome, the mistress of the world, was the unwitting agent employed to complete the word of prophecy. When Augustus sent Coponius as governor of Judea he little supposed that he was but an instrument raised up for this very purpose, to accomplish the unchangeable word of the omnipotent Jehovah. When he wrote his order annexing Judea to Syria, or issued the notification of the appointment of Coponius, he little thought of the great issues dependent on both one and the other. How small are kings in all their greatness, when viewed in the light of God's holy word, and how subordinate is their power to that of God. They do but rise and fall obedient to his will, and to advance his kingdom—that kingdom which he is to erect in our world, and which is indeed to be universal.

Next to the grandest event of time, the birth of Christ, (what was the creation of the world to this?) is the appearance of Christ, that is the long looked for Shiloh, in the temple at this eventful passover. This is that to which too much importance cannot be attached

You *may* attach too much importance to events that make a great noise in the world when they occur, but it is impossible to over-estimate the results that will flow in regular sequence from what we now contemplate. And who is this child, who in company with his parents visits Jerusalem at this feast? We have the answer in the following words, and they fill the mind with the most exalted ideas. Indeed the mind is lost in the survey of the qualities here presented, and applied to a human being. They apply, indeed, to the high and holy one who inhabiteth eternity. To whom else do such distinguishing epithets belong? The words to which we refer, and which truly and properly belong to this child, read thus:

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”\*

As, then, we look upon this child, we must unquestionably connect with his person and his presence at the feast the word of prophecy. Whatever might be his intellectual gifts, the grace of his manner, his personal beauty—whatever the promise of his boyhood—these words betoken a something far beyond the great-

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\* Isa. ix. 6, 7.

est earthly gifts and accomplishments. It is well to dwell upon these words as we view this boy moving to and fro during the days of the feast. We may ask ourselves what do they mean? What is their purport? Do they refer to this child? Do they point to him as the promised Shiloh, the Messiah, the long looked for king of the Jews? He was to be born of a virgin; the place his birth, long before that event, had been designated as Bethlehem, and he was to be the Son of David. All these marks this boy bears: and now at the early age of twelve he is seen in the temple, participator with his parents of the rites of the feast—partaking of the pass-over with them—eating with them on the first day of unleavened bread the sacrificial lamb.

That he knows his own mission who can doubt? He had not to come to the knowledge of it by degrees. It did not open to his mind by little and little, as day slowly opens. He had a full perception of what it implied from the first. This is evident from his own words in reply to his mother, who expressed the grief that she and his father had felt owing to his absence and their separation from him. Remember, it is a child twelve years of age speaking to his parents: “How is it that ye sought me?” As if he had said, “Ye should have given yourselves no concern respecting me. I am perfectly safe. Ye should have known this.” Then he adds, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”\*

These words were spoken, it should be remembered,

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\* Luke ii. 49.



in one of the rooms of the temple. There were a number of rooms for different purposes, which were connected with and opened upon the different courts. There was one on the east end of the sanctuary, called Gazeth, where the Sanhedrin sat.\* This room was partly within the sanctuary, and partly without. It was perhaps the very place where these words were spoken—and spoken in the presence of the Jewish doctors.

They did not understand the import of the words, neither did his parents. The language showed his own prescience. It was the answer of one whose “understanding and answers” had filled the whole assembly with surprise. They conveyed no disrespect; but they brought out luminously his wonderful character; and should be regarded as a commentary on the words of the prophet: “his name shall be called Wonderful, counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” His business, what was it? Whatever it was, we may be fully assured of this, that it could be accomplished by none but God. He who built the earth and the skies could alone do what this child asseverated that he had come into the world to do. We read of this child, that “*the government shall be upon his shoulder.*” What government? That of the universe. What of the kingdom that he has come into our world to establish—of that universal empire which during the days of the Roman empire Daniel said was to be set up by the God of heaven, and which should

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\* Prid. Plan of the temple according to Josephus and the Talmud.

never be destroyed?\* The kingdom was to be that of David, set up anew on our earth. It is of this the inspired prophet speaks when connecting the child of ten years with its future glory, prosperity and power, he says, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever."

Thus we have a glimpse of the rays of glory that surround the head of this child. Having darted one ray of excessive brightness upon those who witnessed the interview between the parents and the son, he withdrew from the public stage, and was once more hidden in the obscurity of the village of Nazareth. Those shades received him once more,—those rural scenes; that fountain near the village. Years passed away; not a sound issued from thence. The world changed rulers; Tiberius Cæsar meanwhile succeeded Augustus, but he who according to the tradition current in those days was to be "king of the whole earth," remained in privacy. At twelve he spoke with the tone and authority of a king, yea, of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the glory shone forth for a moment. He became after this subject to his parents, giving an example of filial docility and obedience—the most perfect obedience—which from its loveliness commanded universal esteem and love.

Memorable days; days of childhood and youth! We

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\* Dan. ii. 44.



may imagine something of the early days of Moses and Samuel, those great instruments in forwarding the kingdom of God upon the earth. They grew up filled with wisdom and with grace, and conscious of the high destiny to which they were called. So of this child; the grace of God was upon him; he was filled with heavenly wisdom. In the early morning, as the dew lay upon the grass, he walked forth; at noon under the shade of some tree he sat down; at evening he breathed the fragrant air, and surveyed the clear sky, and the stars shining in the firmament, and communed in silence. Fourteen years were thus passed,—till the voice of his forerunner was heard, “crying in the wilderness,” re-affirming what has been already implied, if not expressly stated, that God was in our world: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, (Jehovah) make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”\*

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\* Isaiah xl. 3.

## Book Second.

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### CHAPTER I.

A. D. 12.—TIBERIUS ADMITTED INTO CO-PARTNERSHIP WITH  
AUGUSTUS :

FROM HENCE THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF TIBERIUS MENTIONED  
IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE, IS TO BE RECKONED.\*

SEVEN years prior to the time mentioned in this chapter, Tiberius Nero Cæsar, had returned from the island of Rhodes, where he had spent nearly eight years, to the city of Rome. At the time of his return he was forty-six years of age. When he voluntarily exiled himself from Rome and went to Rhodes, it was very much against the wishes of his mother Livia and Augustus. Augustus complained of him to the senate, and said that he was deserted by his step-son. "The earnest entreaties of his mother" made no impression. Upon their persisting in the design of detaining him he refused to take any sustenance for four days together.† He left Rome for the island of Rhodes one year before

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\* Prld. Con. Part 2, An. 12.

† Seut. Life of Tiberius, sec. 10.

the birth of Christ; and consequently toward the close of the reign of Herod the Great.

As a military tribune, as commander in various wars as governor of the province of Gallia Comata, he had, acquitted himself with great credit. When he returned from his wars he entered the city with an ovation, and riding in a chariot, and is said by some to have been the first that ever was honored with this distinction.\*

At Rhodes he led a quiet and retired life. "The pleasantness and healthiness of the island" influenced him to choose it as a place of residence. "He contented himself with a small house, and a villa not much larger, near the town. He was a constant attendant upon the schools and lecture rooms of the professors of the liberal arts." Tiberius was addicted to the study of astrology, and under Thrasyllus the astrologer he indulged his inclination on the island. It is said of this Thrasyllus, that upon sight of the ship which brought the intelligence that Tiberius might return to Rome, (his mother had with difficulty gained the consent of Augustus, who would hardly forgive his departure) he said "good news was coming."†

Tiberius left the island with confident hopes of his future elevation. These hopes, we are told, had been nourished in him from childhood. We may easily suppose that his mother, after she became the wife of Augustus, encouraged these aspirations. Her heart was bound up in this son, and she labored assiduously for his advancement. At the time of his leaving Rhodes

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\* Suet. Tib. sec. 9.

† Ibid. sec. 14.

all the auguries portended greatness, and full of hope, he re-entered the city. He took up his residence first in a street called Carinæ, in Pompey's house, and afterwards removed to the gardens of Mecænas, on the Esquiline, living in retirement, "without any preferment in the government." The auspices did not speak in vain. About the time of his return died both Caius Cæsar and Lucius his brother: Caius Cæsar of a wound which he had received in Armenia; Lucius Cæsar died at Marseilles, on his way to Spain. These two young men, so early cut off, were the sons of Marcus Agrippa, by Julia, daughter of Augustus. As they were the grandsons of Augustus, he had adopted and intended them for his successors in the empire.\*

In the second year of the reign of Archelaus in Judea, Caius Cæsar, being then only nineteen years of age, set out for the east. He went first to Egypt, thence to Judea, passing through the city of Jerusalem. Unlike his father, M. Agrippa, who, as we stated in our former volume,† offered sacrifices with no common solemnity in the Jewish temple to the God of the Jews, this young man, his son, would not pay his devotions at Jerusalem.‡ This neglect may have proceeded from his irreligion, rather than from want of respect to the Jews; for both Caius and his brother Lucius led loose lives, to the grief and displeasure of Augustus.§ His career in the east was short, as he died in his twenty-third year; his brother Lucius died the preceding year.

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\* Tac. An. b. i. c. 3. † Herod the Great, page

‡ Suet. Life of Augustus Cæsar, sec. 93. § Dion. Cassius, vol. li. p. 167.



They died within eighteen months of each other. Thus these two young men who, according to the Roman law, were the same as sons, (for the Roman law made no difference between adoption and natural filiation) passed away, and left the empire open to Tiberius.

There was, it is true, another son of Agrippa still living, called Posthumus Agrippa, because he was born after the death of his father. This young man was about sixteen years of age at the time he was adopted in the forum by Augustus along with his step-son Tiberius,\* but displeasing his father by his "coarse and unruly temper," he was confined at Surrentum.† This left Tiberius free and unfettered, with the empire in full view.

The adoption of Tiberius into the Cæsarean family by Augustus, took place in the seventh year of the reign of Archelaus in Judea. At the same time Augustus required Tiberius to adopt Germanicus, the eldest son of his brother Claudius Drusus; a young man of the greatest promise, and dearly beloved by the Roman people.

As the first mark of distinguished favor, and clearly pointing out the future emperor, "the tribunitian authority was conferred upon him for five years."

About the time of the deposition of Archelaus, and when the sovereignty of Judea was passing away, Tiberius went over to superintend the war in Illyricum. This proved to be very serious, and three years elapsed before it was concluded. Tiberius conducted this dan-

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\* Suet. Aug. sec. 65.

† Ibid.



gerous war with admirable skill and prudence. He was a good general; there can be no question as to this. In one of his letters, written during these campaigns, Augustus speaks of his step-son as an "accomplished general." In another letter he says, "In truth, my dear Tiberius, I do not think that amidst so many difficulties, and with an army so little disposed for action, any one could have behaved more prudently than you have done." He brought the war in Illyricum to a successful close.

The three years spent by Tiberius in this war correspond nearly to the two years of the government of Judea by Coponius, and the first year of that of Marcus Ambivius, who succeeded Coponius.

Having returned to Rome from Illyricum, the next year he went into Germany, to repair as far as possible the loss of three legions under Quintilius Varus, and to wipe off the disgrace of the Roman arms. After two years he returned, and entered the city in triumph. Having reached the foot of the Capitoline hill, "before he turned to ascend the capitol, he alighted and knelt before his father, who sat by to superintend the solemnity."\*

We have now reached that most interesting period, the year twelve of the commonly received era, when Augustus, always of a delicate constitution, and bending under the weight of seventy-three years, admitted Tiberius to share with him the sovereignty. This was ratified by a decree of the senate and people of Rome,

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\* Suet. Tib. Sec. 20.

and from this point of time Tiberius Cæsar commenced his reign—a reign which was rendered eventful by its connexion with Christ.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ACCESSION OF TIBERIUS TO THE SOLE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE EMPIRE.

A. U. C. 767.—A. D. 14.

ONE step more and Tiberius Cæsar would reach the height of power, with no one to question his right as sole, supreme, absolute master of the Roman world. This was a pinnacle high enough to make any one's head dizzy. In the third year of his co-partnership with Augustus, the death of the emperor, in the year of Christ 14, raised him to this exalted dignity. He was in Illyricum when urgent word from his mother, Livia, came for his return. The report of the death of Augustus, and the proclamation which announced Tiberius as his successor, were issued at the same time.\* Tiberius was fifty-five years old when he entered on this succession.

The story of domestic intrigue commences from this point. Agrippa Posthumus was still alive; dreaded as a rival, he must be removed. He was at this

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\* Tac. An. book 5, sec. 5.

time twenty-five years old. He had been banished to the little is and of Planasia, near the coast of Etruria in the Tuscan sea. "In praise of this young man," says Tacitus, "much cannot be said: he was a stranger to the liberal arts, uncouth, unformed, and stupidly valuing himself on his bodily strength; yet free from vice, or the imputation or crime."\* A centurion was sent to the island immediately upon the death of Augustus, and, after a severe struggle, slew the last surviving son of M. Agrippa, son-in-law and friend of the late emperor. Livia did not escape censure, as having been accessory to the deaths of Caius and Lucius. It is not at all likely that she was concerned in the early decease of these young men; but there is little or no doubt that Tiberius and Livia were accomplices in the murder of the youthful Agrippa. The murder† was hushed up; no inquiry was made by the senate, though at first Tiberius threatened to refer it to that body. Prudential considerations, urged by his minister, Salustius Crispus, induced him to desist.

Except in the armies in Pannonia and Germany, the accession of Tiberius, though perhaps unwelcome, was followed by no commotion. The senate, the chief men, and the people on the whole, gave in their adherence without delay. The consuls for this year first took the oath of allegiance to Tiberius; they were followed by Scius Strabo, and Caius Turranius, the latter an old and particular friend of Augustus.

Tiberius assumed at once all the outward signs of

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\* Tac. An. book 5, sec. 3.

† Ibid. sec. 6.

power, while before the senate he acted as though undecided whether to accept the empire or not. This did not long last. He soon relinquished his feigned reluctance, and became the third emperor in order in the line of the Cæsars. Julius Cæsar was the first; Cæsar Augustus the second; and Tiberius Nero Cæsar, the present emperor, the third. In the days of these three monarchs was the foundation laid of a kingdom that the God of heaven would establish in our earth; the broad and deep foundation of a glorious kingdom was then laid; the pinnacles and towers of its capitol are yet to be seen rising high in the sky; a nation will be born in a day, and the lustre of Rome in her proudest days, when, according to the calculations of some writers, she numbered four millions of inhabitants,\* will be eclipsed.

We will cast an eye upon the family group of the royal palace, on the Palatine hill, the whole of which was occupied as the residence of the prince,—with its temple, theatre, museum or library, and extensive gardens. The situation was airy, pleasant healthful. Augustus, so long a resident of the palace, had passed away, but a large family remained. Here was Livia, who, having been adopted into the Julian family, was also called Julia. She had also the additional title of Augusta. At this time she was sixty-seven years of age. She was married in her youth to Tiberius Nero, by whom she had two sons, Tiberius Nero, and Claudius Drusus. Both Livia and her husband belonged to the Claudian family, one of the most ancient and honorable

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\* The Cæsars. De Quincy, who contests the point stoutly.



of Rome. Amid the disorder occasioned by the civil war her husband had sided with the losing party; but afterward having become reconciled to Augustus, Livia, while her husband was still alive, was married to the emperor. She was young and beautiful at the time of her marriage, (if that sacred word may be applied in such a case\*). Augustus, deeply enamored, hesitated at nothing. Inauspicious as such nuptials might well be deemed, Livia, by a wise woman-craft,† as she termed it, always maintained her ascendancy. Next to the possession of power herself, it was her most earnest wish that her son should succeed his step-father. Augustus was very desirous of issue by Livia, but was disappointed.

Livia meant to rule conjointly with her son; at first her name appeared in public acts and decrees in connexion with his; but Tiberius soon became dissatisfied with this arrangement and withdrew his confidence from his mother by degrees. Dissensions soon arose between the mother and son, which ended in their complete estrangement. Owing to her love of rule, and the imperiousness of her disposition, (this trait of character she contrived to hide from Augustus) her exclusion from the government, and the bounds set to her influence must have been severely felt. The murder of Agrippa Posthumous was probably brought home to her bosom by the marked ingratitude of her son. The disruption did not occur at first; Tiberius resided in the

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\* The Cæsars. De Quincy, p. 78.

† Dion Cassius, vol. i, p. 239.



palace, and the empress mother—Julia Augusta—presided as in the past.

There was another widow, a resident of the palace at the time of the death of Augustus, whose pure and estimable character reminded of the matrons of Rome of an earlier day. This was the younger Antonia, widow of Claudius Drusus, brother of Tiberius. Antonia was the daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia, sister of Augustus. There were two sisters of the same name—this was the younger of the two. Germanicus, the idol of the Roman people, was her son; she had a daughter by the name of Livia, or Livilla. Antonia was a particular friend of Berenice, the mother of king Agrippa. After the death of Berenice, who died at Rome, she showed that she was a friend, for the mother's sake, to the son in the days of his distress and poverty. The friendship of Antonia was firm and lasting. She would not listen to the proposal of a second marriage; she remained faithful to the memory of Drusus, and was, on this account, greatly honored. She retained the confidence of Tiberius to the end of his life. Whoever else he might distrust, he confided in the unswerving integrity and sincere friendship of his brother's widow, Antonia the younger, his sister-in-law.

Tiberius, in his prime, is thus described by Suetonius. "In person he was large and robust, of a stature somewhat above the common size; broad in the shoulders and chest, and proportionable in the rest of his frame. He was of a fair complexion, and wore his hair so long behind that it covered his neck. He had a handsome face, but it was often full of pimples. His

eyes were large. He walked with his neck stiff and upright; generally with a frowning countenance, being for the most part silent”\* At the time of his accession to the empire he had changed; his personal appearance was not so good; the face was not so fair; the form was not so erect; his head was more or less bald; the flowing hair, falling on his neck, “which was observed to be a mark of distinction by the Claudian family,” was gone. Ten years later, when he was about sixty-seven years of age, Tacitus speaks of his figure as emaciated, his body sinking under the weight of years, and his face disfigured by blotches covered with medical applications.†

Julia, his wife, the daughter of Augustus, still lived in banishment on the island of Pandataria, in the Tuscan sea. She was the second wife of Tiberius; his first wife was Vipsania Agrippina, daughter of M. Agrippa by his first wife, Pomponia. For reasons of state policy, Augustus, after the death of Agrippa, compelled his step-son to divorce Vipsania, and to marry Julia. Passionately attached to Vipsania, disliking Julia, he was nevertheless forced to yield. During the stay of Tiberius at Rhodes, the conduct of Julia was so disgraceful, she lived so flagitious a life, without even attempting to veil her vices from public view, that a bill of divorce was sent to Tiberius by Augustus, and the unfortunate woman banished from Rome, to which she never returned. Tiberius, pitiless when he possessed full power, during the first year of his reign [A. D. 14.] ordered her to be

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\* Sec. 68.

† An. book iv. sec. 57.

stoned to death. Julia was the daughter of Augustus by Scribonia, whom he divorced when he forcibly took Livia from her husband, Tiberius Nero, and they were married. Such was the unhappy end of Julia, only child of Augustus. To the divorce of Scribonia by Augustus, to gratify an unbridled passion, reasoning by analogy in the absence of facts, we might venture to trace the sad life of his daughter, to some extent, at least, as its first source. Nursed in luxury, surrounded by the pomp of power from infancy, her will almost a law,—the wretched Julia, daughter of the master of the world, perished miserably in exile.

Two other inmates of the palace at this time, we may mention: Drusus, the son of the emperor, and his young wife, Livia, or Livilla, sister of Germanicus, and daughter of Antonia the younger. This Livia had already been married to Caius Cæsar; upon his death she married Drusus. Dark is the tale connected with her tragic history, illumined with not a ray of light. As for Germanicus, he was commander of the legions on the Rhine; his wife, Agrippina was with him.

There was yet another resident of the palace, Claudius, (Tiberius Claudius Drusus Cæsar) afterwards emperor, he was of an infirm mind and sickly constitution, and was but little noticed.

Already on the front steps of the palace, if not yet admitted into the confidence of Tiberius, stood Ælius Sejanus, destined to succeed Sallustius Crispus, the minister then in favor. He was, in this early stage of his career, all pliancy; modest and of insinuating manners; but very diligent and attentive to his duties. Outwardly

un aspiring,—devoted to the prince—regulating even his looks by what he knew of the emperor's character, he worked his way into his confidence, until he gained an entire ascendancy over his affections.\*

There were also two boys in the palace, walking in its long corridors, playing in the garden, wandering in its labyrinthine walks, listening to the play of the fountain—who from their relation to Augustus, in case of certain contingencies, might one day become heirs of the empire. The names of the two lads were Nero and Drusus, the sons of Germanicus. The youngest was nine years of age, the eldest a year or two older, and who was of a pleasing and amiable disposition. Germanicus had a third son, named Caius Caligula, but he was with his father and mother with the legions on the Rhine.

For the present all was calm and peaceful in the palace. In the beginning Tiberius conceded much to his mother; Drusus did not yet feel the overshadowing influence of Sejanus. Drusus the son, and Germanicus the adopted son of the emperor, were regarded as his successors. All seemed settled, and as if the future might move along with a regular and even pace. Even the empress mother was strong and vigorous; in the full possession of all her faculties, and promising to survive many years. Her understanding was excellent, and Augustus had derived important advantages from her advice.

The funeral is over. Livia had spent five days of

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 1.



mourning in the vicinity of the sepulchre on the Campus Martius which had received her husband's remains.\* Tiberius is now established in the empire, he gives the watchword to the guards; he is attended to and from the senate by soldiers; the tramp of the sentry is heard in front of the palace; all things proceed as before. On the winding steps of the palace, under the high portico, facing the Via Sacra, is seen the tall, robust figure of Tiberius; but the genial manner of Augustus is not there. Tiberius is cold, distant, reserved. When he speaks he speaks slowly, accompanying his words with a slight gesticulation of his fingers.†

Tiberius, for two years after his accession to the empire, did not leave Rome. During the dissensions in the army he pretended that he would leave either for Pannonia or the Rhine, but he did not go. The people complained much, but he put them off with specious excuses for delay, until Germanicus on the Rhine, and his son Drusus whom he sent from Rome to Pannonia, on hearing of the insurrection there, had quieted them.

When at length he did leave Rome, he made short excursions to some of the neighboring towns; he did not go farther than Antium at any time, a city on the sea coast, about thirty English miles from Rome, a favorite place of resort. The dust, the heat, the sickliness of the months of August and September were gladly exchanged by the wealthy persons of Rome for the invigorating breezes of the sea coast.

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\* Dion. Cassius. vol. i. p

† Suet. Tib. sec. 63.

Arrived at the acme of human power we might suppose Tiberius would be at rest. Far from it. He looked at Germanicus with an envious eye; his exploits and popularity filled him with jealous dread. Livia shared in this feeling; and both mother and son during the life of Germanicus had one tie in common—the fear of this rising young man. While he lived the mother and son could not afford to break out into an open rupture.

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## CHAPTER II.

### DEATH OF DRUSUS.

FOR the space of nine years, from the accession of Tiberius, all things moved on smoothly in Rome. Tiberius continued to enjoy good health; his son Drusus survived, though Germanicus was dead. He died in the east, A. D. 19, not without suspicion of poison.—Great was the general grief at his death; Rome was wrapped in mourning. He possessed every quality that could engage the affections or command the respect of men. He was universally beloved. On the day of his funeral all Rome attended the interment; his mother Antonia, however, with Tiberius and the empress, remained secluded in the palace; they did not join the funeral procession, and were not found among the mourners. Of the grief of Antonia at the loss of such a son, no one doubted; but few believed that Tiberius or

his mother sincerely regretted the loss. They made a show of grief, but in their hearts were glad to be rid of a dreaded and hated rival.

Three or four more years passed on; Drusus still lived; and was the sole avowed heir of the empire. In the meanwhile a new man, by name Ælius Sejanus, who was from Vulsinii, a city of Etruria, had become all powerful. He was the son of Scius Strabo, a Roman knight.\* In early life he attached himself to Caius Cæsar. His father had commanded the prætorian guards, and when he was made prefect of Egypt, his son was appointed in his place. He collected the prætorian bands, till that time quartered in various parts of Rome, formed them into one corps, and placed them outside the walls of the city.† He himself appointed the tribunes and centurions; and “by affability and caresses” he gained the affections of the soldiers. He sought also to gain the senate, and to make that body subservient to his will by bribery and favors. Those that were friendly to him, paid him court and sufficiently flattered his inordinate vanity, or promoted his ambitious aims, rose to favor, and obtained important commands. Those who were opposed to his administration were treated as enemies; and his wrath was deadly. In the course of time he so entirely gained the confidence of Tiberius, that overlooking Drusus, his own son, and heir of the empire, in his ordinary conversation he spoke of Sejanus as his associate in the cares of government, and used the same language even to the senate. His images

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 1.

† Ibid. sec. 2.



also were placed in the theatre, the forum, the camps; in the *principia*, the place appropriated to the standards of the legions.\*

No levee was crowded like that of Sejanus. The first men of the city came in crowds; even that of the emperor was not so well attended. Even the consuls brought to him the communications they intended to present to the emperor,† so that nothing in the form of letters, petitions or communications, could reach the emperor which he did not approve. His hand was every where; his eye was upon all. It is true the prosperity of Sejanus excited envy. Tiberius says himself that there were those who complained that Sejanus had “already soared above the equestrian rank, and that he enjoyed higher favor than was ever exercised either by Mecænas or Agrippa.”‡

Of those who felt deeply, and resented keenly, this undue elevation to the imperial family of a stranger—a man born not in Rome but in an obscure province, was Drusus, the son of the emperor. Neither was he afraid to speak; he spoke openly and constantly. He took no pains to conceal his thoughts. High spirited, without the least fear, he called him an “upstart,” and denounced his ambitious views. Drusus was offended, also, with his father, and said, that “though he had a son to succeed him, he preferred a stranger to a share in the administration.” They had numerous altercations; and once, Drusus having raised his hand, the minister, advancing forward, received a blow in his face.

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\* Tac. An. b. iv. sec. 2. † Dion. Cas. vol. i. p. 231. ‡ Tac. An. b. iv. sec. 46.



Nothing could exceed the resentment of Sejanus. His pride was deeply wounded.

There was Livia, the wife of Drusus. When young she was not handsome, but "she was now grown up in the most perfect form of regular beauty."\* She was a mother. Four years before she was delivered of two sons at a birth. This had transported Tiberius with joy, who, highly superstitious, regarded the event as an omen of good, and said that "so singular a blessing had never happened to any Roman of equal dignity." Thus already was the empire established not only in Drusus, her husband, but in his children. A few years would place her husband at the head of the empire; and she would attain the high dignity that the elder Livia now enjoyed. Her rank also was illustrious of itself; she was niece of Augustus, sister to Germanicus, daughter-in-law of Tiberius. She was indeed of the highest rank; blessed with children; with every grace of person and manner; surrounded by all earthly good. A model of all that was good, pure and estimable in every relation of life, she possessed in her mother, Antonia; while her brother, Germanicus, had left behind a name hardly second to any in the annals of Rome. There were also the smiles, and soft, playful endearments of her two little sons to win the mother's heart. What age when childhood is more interesting than that which her children had reached. What bright hopes were theirs—what high honors would fall to their share as soon as they should assume the manly gown, and be presented by

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 3.

their father in the forum to the people as princes of the empire.

It was upon Livia—the mother, the wife, the future empress—that Sejanus fixed his eye. He had the art to gain her affections; she yielded to his seductions, and dishonored her husband, her family, and her own illustrious name. She fell a victim to the arts of an accomplished seducer; or else, injured by the evil example of the court, led away by passion, she, like Julia, was prepared beforehand for an adulterous connexion. As to ambition, what had Sejanus to offer—allowing that he should succeed in his attempt upon the empire at the death of Tiberius—which she did not already possess?

This first step in a dark domestic drama was kept completely concealed; no suspicion seems to have been awakened. The curtain rises, and discloses a still darker scene. Livia, led along from one step to another, (when does guilt stop in its career?) was induced to commit yet another crime; she joined Sejanus to murder her husband. Sejanus now plainly showed his hand; he had resolved upon the empire, whoever stood in the way. Livia should yet share not only his bed—but the empire; but for this end, Drusus, her husband, must be first put out of the way. The confidential physician of Livia, by name Eudemus, was taken into the secret; and a poison, “operating as a slow corrosive,” was prepared; and Lygdus the eunuch was selected to administer the draught. But on the eve of the crime they hesitated. “The magnitude of the crime filled their minds with terror: they fluctuated between

opposite counsels; they resolved; they hesitated; delay and doubt, and confusion, followed.”\*

But Drusus’ outspoken words his fierce resentment, the violence of his opposition, at length led them to act; the draught was administered by the eunuch Lygdus, and brought on “the symptoms of a natural disorder.” During the illness of Drusus, Tiberius was not alarmed, and went as usual to the senate. At length his son died; and so perfectly natural were the symptoms, that none supposed that he had come to his end by violence. The murder was thus successfully accomplished, and the chief obstacle in the way of the future elevation of Sejanus to the empire was removed.

The death of Drusus, son of Tiberius, and heir of the Roman empire, occurred in the twenty-third year of the Christian era, and about three years before the voice of the forerunner of Christ was heard in the land of Judea.

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 3.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE DEPARTURE OF TIBERIUS FROM ROME.

THREE years more glided away without any marked events, though Tiberius, chiefly instigated by Sejanus, began to show the innate cruelty of his nature. The dark days of Rome had come, and many were the innocent victims destined to fall beneath the hand of violence. Tiberius himself had resentments to gratify; so had his minister—and fears also. What was called the law of violated majesty was made free use of, and words spoken to the disadvantage of Augustus or Tiberius were treated as capital crimes; sometimes actions also, perfectly innocent in themselves, were construed so as to reflect upon the imperial dignity of Augustus or his step-son. When other causes of condemnation were lacking, they could never fail to find under the law of violated majesty some pretext to put a man to death, if the emperor or his minister had so predetermined.

A case that arose under this law, so arbitrary and uncertain in its character, in the early part of the reign of Tiberius, will illustrate its nature and operation. Apuleia Varilia, grand-niece of Augustus, was charged with using defamatory words of the emperor, and also of Tiberius and his mother. Tiberius directed the senate to distinguish between calumnious language spoken



of Augustus, and that which was spoken of himself and of his mother. If Varilia had spoken irreverent words against Augustus, the law must take its course, but if against himself or his mother, her personalities might pass with impunity. Varilia was acquitted on the law of majesty.\* The reader will notice that they were words, not actions against the government, that were made the ground of a capital accusation. Tiberius had the good sense on several other occasions beside the above, not to press this law, but he was not always equally scrupulous. Sejanus, also, under the cover of this law, put many an innocent man to death; it was an easy way of getting rid of his enemies. It created informers who preyed upon the body politic; these became a numerous class; they obtained wealth and distinction in their infamous profession. Tiberius encouraged the whole tribe; he thought them necessary to the safety of the state. They were the fruitful source of endless ills. They in time covered Rome with an almost impenetrable cloud; confidence and joy departed from society. Spies lurked everywhere in ambush, and sometimes plots were laid to entrap men in their words when they thought that they were unbosoming themselves to dear friends. This law, suspended over every man's head, as by a thread, the sword of Damocles. The days of terror and anguish were at hand.

But it was only step by step that the dark days came. After the death of Drusus, however, the evil made rapid strides.

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\* Tac. An. book ii. sec. 59.

Drusus dead, Tiberius introduced the two sons of Germanicus, Nero and Drusus, both quite young, to the senate, and spoke of them as the future stay of the empire. The prospects of these young men were bright, but they were soon overclouded. They were in the way of Sejanus, and he soon found means to awaken distrust in the heart of Tiberius, and to lead him to think that they were conspiring against him. The year following the death of Drusus, [A. D. 24], the pontiffs, and the other orders of the priesthood, thinking to please the emperor, when they offered up the usual prayers, on the first day of the new year, for Tiberius, at the same time mentioned the names of the two young princes, Nero and Drusus.\* This filled Tiberius with ire. He considered it as a reflection upon himself, and also calculated to have a bad effect upon the minds of the young men. It was the aim of Sejanus to keep them out of sight as much as possible. To Tiberius he said that the partisans of Agrippina and her son were already numerous, and that unless some of the leaders of her party were cut off, the discord would increase, and danger, even to the emperor would ensue. Tiberius too easily inclined his ear to the malicious insinuations of the minister; and as the result of this determination, Caius Silius, who had distinguished himself under Germanicus, and Sosia Galla, his wife, a particular friend of Agrippina's, were marked for destruction. There was no real crime charged against Silius; "the prosecution went altogether on the crime of violated majesty."

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 4,

Silius, seeing himself condemned beforehand, put an end to his life. Sosia was banished.\*

Two years having passed since the death of her husband, Livia [A. D. 25) became extremely solicitous for the consummation of her marriage with Sejanus. Urged by her importunities, yet on account of his guilt partly fearing to move in the matter, Sejanus was at last emboldened to ask permission of the emperor to marry the widow of Drusus.

He received but little encouragement from Tiberius, and, alarmed, did not farther urge his suit. This was no doubt a great disappointment to Livia, but she was compelled to submit. The will of Tiberius was law; and the marriage was necessarily deferred to a more convenient opportunity. The non-compliance of the emperor filled the favorite with fear lest his influence was on the wane. His guilty mind also exaggerated the danger. It was not so great as he thought; the dread secret, confined to four persons, was well kept; considerations of prudence, of domestic policy, chiefly weighed with Tiberius. He little thought that the petitioner who expressed such an attachment to his person, who made no account "of rank or splendor," who, as a "common sentinel, sought no higher honor than to guard the life of his sovereign,"† had already imbrued his hands in the blood of his son, seduced his daughter-in-law, and was now engaged in a new conspiracy to take off by foul means the sons of Germanicus, the remaining heirs of the empire, that he might him-

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 18, 19.

† Ibid. b. iv. sec. 39.



self attain the supreme power. Successful crime encouraged him to proceed in his guilty career, and to stop at nothing that would help him to accomplish his daring purpose.

The more effectually to conceal his plans, and, if possible, hold a yet greater sway over the emperor, he proposed to him to leave the city of Rome, and retire to some sequestered spot, and "to lead a life of ease and solitary pleasure." The proposal suited exactly the wishes of the emperor, and he resolved to do so. Soon after, [A. D. 26], Tiberius availing himself of the pretence of consecrating two temples, one to Jupiter at Capua, and another to Augustus at Nola, withdrew to Campania, with a small and select retinue, secretly purposing in his heart not again to re-enter the gates of the city; a resolution which he steadfastly kept.

This was the very year made memorable in all history, when John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, having until now been hidden from public notice in the wilderness of Judea, made his appearance in the valley of the Jordan, journeying up and down on the banks of the sacred stream, and announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. This was a note of warning even to the Roman empire, and to all the kingdoms of the earth, that God was about to give unto the new-born "King of the Jews," as the magi styled him at his birth, "the throne of his father David."\* He was about to ascend that throne, (passing through death, and drawing his title as "Prince of the kings of the earth,"† from the

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\* Luke ch. i. 33.

† Rev. i. 5.



grave) to “reign over the house of Israel forever—while of his kingdom there should be no end.”\*

This year, also, it will be remembered, was the fifteenth of Tiberius, from the time that he was admitted to reign in co-partnership with Augustus, and therein the gospel of Jesus Christ had its beginning; for Christ appeared for the revealing of his gospel first by this his messenger sent before his face to prepare the way for his personal appearance; which was accordingly made by him three years and a half after.†

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## CHAPTER IV.

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS.”

A. D. 26.

WHILE such deep gloom was settling over the house of Tiberius Cæsar—while Livia, the empress mother still lived, and Tiberius himself, at the age of sixty-seven, was leaving Rome to seek a home elsewhere, during the last half of his reign of twenty-two years—while discord was rife within the palace, and Sejanus the minister was secretly instigating the emperor against his grandsons and their mother, Agrippina, widow of Germanicus—a different scene was opening in the land of Judea. Prophecy had long ago declared that during

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\* Luke, ch. i. 33.

† Prid. Con. an. 26.

the ascendancy of the Roman empire the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which, rising above the vicissitudes of time, should not be left to other people; and which, in process of time, with an irresistible force should break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of the world, while itself should stand forever.\* The time for the opening of a series of events, following each other in long succession, all of which would in regular order tend to the establishment of this kingdom, had at last arrived; and "the great series of ages," sung by the Roman poet had at last commenced.† But as the great oak from an acorn grows slowly, and becomes not in a day the monarch of the forest, so it would require time to lay the foundations of this new and heavenly kingdom; and ages must elapse ere it spreads over the entire earth, and fills with its glory the world. It is to be built on a basis different from that of the kingdoms of the earth, and to draw its lustre from a new source. Its triumph was designed to be the triumph of righteousness in our world; of peace, not of war; of true, not false glory. The wreath that it would braid would be immortal.

The forerunner who was to announce the speedy approach of the destined "King of the earth," (under this title Roman historians tell us that he was looked for) after a long period of seclusion, suddenly and abruptly as his namesake Elijah, made his appearance in the land of Israel, in the twenty-second year (according to the received chronology,) of the Christian era. It was in

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\* Dan. ii. 44.

† Virg. 4th Eclogue.

reality the thirtieth year, as Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced it in the sixth century, made a mistake, placing the beginning of it four years too late.\*

Judea at this time enjoyed a profound peace; as did nearly if not quite all of the provinces of the Roman empire. It was the policy of Tiberius to cultivate peace; if war at times broke out during his reign, it was to suppress insurrection, not to extend his conquests. The wars were few and short during his entire reign. Judea, with the occasional outbreaks that we have already mentioned, had scarcely a ripple to disturb its tranquillity. This state of things was peculiarly favorable to the first preaching of the gospel; and strongly contrasted with the troublesome times that followed. A single legion was sufficient, and more than sufficient for Judea, during the ministry of John and Christ. While there were at this time eight legions on the Rhine, "in that vast extent of country which stretches from Syria to the Euphrates, bordering on the confines of Iberia, Abania, and other states under the protection of the Roman arms,"† but four legions were required to maintain the rights of the empire. Thus tranquil was the whole East at this most eventful period, while Judea was pre-eminently so. The way of the King of Peace in the east was prepared by the pacific policy of Tiberius, and in this he did but imitate Augustus.

At this favorable juncture in Jewish history, and in some respects, of the history of the world—at this sin-

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\* Prid. Con. An. 1.

† Tac. An. book iv. sec. 5.

gularly striking prophetic era—the precursor of the King of all the earth, in other words, of the Jewish Messiah, stepped upon the stage, and opened more fully than it had been opened before, the counsel of God in regard to his method for the removal of evil from our world, and filling it with the knowledge of himself. It was a grand crisis in the history of the world, and was designed to show, in the clearest manner possible, that the “foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God stronger than man.” The whole plan, its conception and incipency, in its progress and results, baffles human thought, and confounds the pride of the human understanding.

When John preached, the great point that was required was faith in a Messiah soon to appear—when Christ preached, it was that the Messiah *had* now appeared. The whole turned on this: this would revolutionize the world; overturn sooner or later the kingdoms of the earth; and in the end establish government universally on the basis of the recognition of God—his supervision of the affairs of men, whether small or great, and the ascription of glory to God alone. It is not difficult to see that the idea of progress, as developed in the Bible, lies in the knowledge of God; and this in a sense deep, high, intimate. It is a knowledge of God similar to that which you obtain by familiar communication; by seeing another daily; by an interchange of views; by the examination of character in many lights, and from various points of view. Real progress, in the Bible, is not ascribed to the arts and sciences, to the development of the intellect; it is the instruction of the



soul in righteousness: in other words it consists in the knowledge of God.

Faith in God is the key-note of the Bible. This word, and this alone, like the trumpet of old, when used by one prophetically inspired, gives a certain sound.

The precursor of Christ stood on this ground. What was there in relation to himself—his birth—conception—the announcement in the temple to his father, Zacharias—that was not preternatural. You must either allow this, or rule away all the facts. There is no alternative. You must likewise go backward, and rule away the predictions which preceded his birth; that of the prophet Malachi, and that of the prophet Isaiah. You must also explain the coincidence of prophecy—the voice that was to issue from the wilderness—with the fact that John, the precursor of Christ, resided in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel. By this designation, also, he was mentioned by Christ, when, in eulogy of John the Baptist, he cried to the people of Israel, “What went ye out into the wilderness to see?” A man of uncertain character—some false pretender like Judas of Gallilee—some aspirant for the favor of earthly monarchs? Not at all—but really and truly a prophet—such as had appeared in the earlier stages of Jewish history; a man clothed with divine power, and filled with the spirit of prophecy.

There is, beside, to be taken into the account, the purity of John’s character. Josephus, the Jewish historian describes the prophet who, he says, was “called the Baptist,” as a “good man;” and as one who com-

manded the Jews to "exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another, and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism." He also speaks of his death under Herod Antipas; condemns Herod for the act; and asserts that in his war with Arctas, king of Arabia, he was defeated, in the opinion of the people, as a mark of God's displeasure to him.\*

It is to be remembered, also, the very deep impression produced by the circumstances of his birth upon the minds of those who became acquainted with them, as the wonderful narrative was noised abroad, carried on the tongues of those who dwelt in Hebron and the adjacent country. A strange fear fell upon men; such a fear as arises when God makes some marvellous display of his power and glory in a manner so evident as not to be questioned. They were filled with wonder! they anticipated great events. They said one to another, looking on in amazement, "What manner of child will this be!" The concatenation of events was such that no flaw could be detected. The past and the present, the voice of prophecy, and angelic ministration, were united in the child; and all set their seal upon his birth as extraordinary in the highest degree. Then there was the youth of the child, as he grew up, in happy consonance with all the rest. How grave, holy, and sweet was his youth! At a certain age, taught of God, and led by the Spirit, (the hand of God was on the child), he took up his abode in the wilderness. His life was not only solitary, but, according to the vow of the

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\* Antiq. book xviii. c. v. sec. 2.

Nazarite, it was most abstemious: so that it was said of him by Christ, in view of his entire abstinence from wine and strong drink, and the plainness of his fare, that John, his precursor, came "neither eating nor drinking."

It should also be remembered whose reign upon our earth his baptism and ministry were designed to inaugurate. His father, at the time of his circumcision, called him "the prophet of the Highest." What stronger language than this could he have used?—"The prophet of the Highest!" He was chosen to introduce God into the world; to make real the highest flights of poetry; and to give to faith ground on which to stand, when told that God, incarnated, will, to use the language of Virgil, "remove every vestige of guilt from our earth, and release it from fear forever."\*

Dreams of glory, visions of brightness, were before the mind of the prophet. The earth will be released from fear; every vestige of guilt will be removed. "The earth, as her first offerings, will pour forth everywhere, without culture, creeping ivy, with lady's-glove, and Egyptian beans with smiling acanthus intermixed. The Assyrian spikenard shall grow in every soil."† A wave of glory and of smiling peace will pass over the earth, and the prophet of the Highest foresees this as the happy result of the new age of which he is the appointed harbinger. Who is to do this work? How is it to be done? God is to take the great work in his own hands; and, as in the ancient days, to roll back the

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\* Virg. 4th Eclogue.

† Ibid.

sea, and to bring his people once more to the heritage of their fathers.

Never was man more fully impressed with the greatness of his work than John, the harbinger of Christ, and of the millennial age of our world. He knew well whom he preceded. "He that cometh from above," said he, "is above all." Who can be higher than the Highest? Who can be above him, who is above all? He—a mortal worm—is not to be named in the same breath with one who is so much greater—so much mightier. He is not fit to loose his shoes from his feet. Would it be proper to speak thus in the way of comparison of any creature however exalted? Surely not. The work itself is such as God only can do. Is it not a work worthy of the great Creator? And as in the beginning of the creation, the sons of God sang for joy, and the morning stars were glad, what will be the joy in that happy day when God shall anew plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, "Thou art my people.\*"



## Book Third.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### SEPPHORIS, CAPITAL OF GALILEE.

ON the south side of the large and beautiful plain of Zebulon, on an insulated hill stood the city of Sepphoris,\* the capital of Galilee. It stood nearly on a line with Tiberias and Ptolemais, and was about half way between the two. It was some twenty-five miles from Ptolemais, and commanded a view of the Mediterranean Sea, and of Mount Carmel, "the only great promontory upon the low coast of Palestine, and, beyond all comparison, the finest mountain in the Holy Land."† As to size, Sepphoris was the largest city in Galilee.‡ It was, also, a strongly fortified city; and as the residence of the Tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas, was adorned with fine buildings; among others there was the royal palace. Though "during the ten thousand disorders in

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\* Durb. Trav. in the East, vol. ii. p. 34, 38.

† Stephens' Trav. in the Holy Land, vol. ii p. 271.

‡ Jewish War, book iii. ch. 2 sec. 4

Judea" which followed the death of Herod the Great, Sepphoris was burned by Quintilius Varus, and many of its inhabitants sold into slavery, yet in the many years that had since elapsed, the city had been repaired by Herod Antipas, and re-peopled. Perhaps, as Herod Antipas was on the most friendly terms with Tiberius Cæsar, many, if not all of those who were sold into captivity, during the war, had been redeemed, and had returned to their own city. For the space of twenty-five years, since those disastrous days, Sepphoris had met with no drawback, and was now overflowing with population. The plain, on one end of which it stood, was highly fertile; it opened upon that of Acre, or Ptolemais, which reached to the sea. Field succeeded to field; the villages were numerous, and very populous,—so that from the city to the sea all was fair and flourishing.

In a south-easterly direction from Sepphoris was Nazareth, separated from it by an intervening hill.\* Here had dwelt, during the entire period of the ethnarchy of Herod Antipas, from the time of his entering on his government until now, [A. D. 26], "Jesus, the son of Joseph." But a short distance—not over a mile and a half†—was this quiet, secluded village from the large, bustling, populous city, with its strong citadel, its high walls, and iron gates; with its towers, soldiers, and large armory well filled with shields and the various weapons of war. Antipas had taken special care, du-

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\* Durb. Trav. in the East. vol. ii. p. 38. See also Rob. Pal. vol. iii. in loco.

† Rob. Pal. vol. iii. in loco.

ring the halcyon days of peace, to provide a formidable armament against the time of war; with however no covert purpose to rise against the Romans.\* At a later period, in the reign of Caligula, the fact of this extensive collection was made use of against him, and was one cause of his deposition and banishment to Lyons, a city of Gaul.”†

During this long term of time, marked by few striking incidents—while the “son of Joseph” passed through the different stages of childhood and youth in the neighboring village of Nazareth—Antipas lived with his wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia;‡ chiefly occupying the royal palace at Sepphoris. Children were born to them here. This marriage was no doubt arranged by Herod the Great, the father of Herod Antipas. It was not until shortly before the ministry of John the Baptist, that Antipas repudiated his first wife, and, contrary to the Jewish law, married Herodias, his brother Herod Philip’s wife. Herodias was daughter of Berenice, and sister of Herod (afterward king) Agrippa.

The acquaintance began in Rome, when the two brothers lodged in the same house. Here, says Josephus, Antipas ventured to talk to her about a marriage between them,§ to which she listened,—both forgetting the law of their fathers. The thing was wrong in its inception; though such arrangements were common at Rome. But these were Jews; and were amenable to

\* Jos Antiq book xviii. ch. 7. sec. 2.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. ch. v sec. i.

§ Ibid.

the law of Moses. They could not with impunity violate that law.

It was late in life when Antipas formed this new connection; he was, probably, about fifty years of age. Considerable time was occupied in the negociation. As it drew toward a close, the first wife of Antipas became acquainted with it; and, concealing her intention, left Sepphoris, and returned to her father in Petra. Thus inauspiciously was the change inaugurated; though, according to the loose notions of marriage that then prevailed, even among the Jews, it was not generally perhaps regarded in a very heinous light. It proved in the end to be the cause of his fall and final banishment.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE BUILDING OF TIBERIAS.

It is likely that soon after the death of Augustus, and the accession of Tiberius Cæsar to the empire, Herod Antipas commenced the building of a new city, as Josephus says, "in the best part of Gallilee, at the lake of Gennesareth."\* Judging from its remains, and the line of wall that may still be partly traced, it was not a large city, though compactly built. The ruins

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\* Jos. Antiq. book xviii. ch. 2 sec. 3.



—seen in our day—would also indicate that it contained “several large and costly structures.”\* This new city Antipas called Tiberias, in honor of the emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and to show his friendship; as Herod the tetrarch was in great favor with Tiberius.† Several years were consumed in the building of it; and every inducement was held out to supply it from the first with a large population. Many Galileans came and dwelt in it; there were strangers also. Some were necessitated by Herod to come thither out of the country belonging to him: and thus was the city soon supplied with inhabitants. He even built houses for poor people, attaching a little glebe to each house. Some persons of condition were constrained to take up their residence in the new city.

The view was fine; the residence on the lake desirable. Nearly the whole eastern shore of the lake could be seen from the city.‡ A fertile plain extended from the back of the walls to the mountain; in front spread the waters of Gennesareth. There were warm baths not far from the city in the village of Emmaus.

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\* Olin's Trav. in the East, vol. 2. p. 396.      † Antiq. book xviii. ch. 2. sec. 3.

‡ Olin's Trav. vol. ii. p. 393.

## CHAPTER III.

HEROD AGRIPPA INVITED BY HIS SISTER HERODIAS TO  
THE COURT OF HEROD ANTIPAS.

Not very long before the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist, Herod Agrippa, then in very poor circumstances, was invited by his sister Herodias to Sepphoris. Agrippa, at the time he received the invitation, was in Idumea with his wife Cypros, at a place called Malatha. He was in the greatest distress; and so dejected that he had thoughts of killing himself. He was, however, cheered and encouraged by his wife, who wrote to his sister Herodias, who had lately become the wife of Herod Antipas, stating the deplorable circumstances of Agrippa, and mentioning her fears—the fears of a loved and faithful wife—that unless he received help he would kill himself. Herodias interposed, as we have stated above: Agrippa with his wife and children came to Sepphoris, and Antipas made him governor of Tiberias.

Agrippa was the son of the unfortunate Aristobulus, slain by his father, Herod the Great. His mother was Berenice, daughter of Salome, sister of Herod the Great. Berenice, after the death of her husband went to Rome, taking with her Agrippa; and here the most of his early life was spent. He was quite intimate with Drusus, the son of Tiberius; and at the time of

his death—or rather murder by Sejanus, aided by Livia the wife of Drusus, and mother of his children—was numbered among his particular friends. On this account he was excluded from the palace and the emperor, who forbade the friends of his deceased son to come into his presence, because on seeing them his grief would be revived.\*

The younger Antonia, during the years that Berenice and her son Agrippa lived at Rome, formed a peculiar attachment to Berenice. They were both widows—young—and had early lost husbands whom they loved. There was the tie of sympathy between them; the tie of young, loving, and virtuous hearts. After the death of Berenice, who died in comparative youth, Antonia, the widow of Drusus, the sister-in-law of Tiberius, transferred her regard to the son of her dear friend,—Herod Agrippa,—a young man of great vivacity, of good impulses, but of most aspiring temper and disposition to extravagance. During his mother's life such was his filial regard, and so fearful was he of giving her pain, that he incurred no debts. But after her death he launched out into the most lavish expense. He had a handsome patrimony, but it was soon expended, and he was deeply involved in debt. This led to all his troubles; he was forced to leave Rome, and came to Idumea. Thence by invitation he came to the court of his brother-in-law; but did not remain here long. He and Herod Antipas soon fell out; he lost his place as governor of Tiberias, and commenced anew

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\* Jos. Antiq. book xviii. ch. 6. sec. 1.

his wanderings. Here we will leave him for the present; in the next volume (3d) of this series of works we will meet with him again, and he will occupy a conspicuous place among the actors who will then make their appearance.

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## CHAPTER IV.

HEROD ANTIPAS A HEARER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

[A. D. 26, 27.]

AND now the whole land is filled with the name of John the Baptist. He is universally regarded as a prophet in the same eminent sense as Elijah and Elisha. These prophets were a power in the land; as witness the authority of Elisha in the camp of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, kings of Judah and Israel, as they warred against the Moabites and the Edomites. What would the kings of Judah and Israel have done in their hour of need but for Elisha? He brought them out of their great extremity. The prophet spoke with the voice of command, because he spoke as the servant of the Lord God Almighty. How small and weak appear these two kings, supported by powerful armies, beside the prophet Elisha,\* dressed very plainly, and speaking

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\* 2 Kings, ch. iii. 14, 20.



few words. Like a pillar the prophet rose high above the rest in the camp, whether kings or chief captains. So was it with John the Baptist; his voice was all potent in the land. All recognised his authority as a prophet, and stood ready to obey his behest. Came he not commissioned from the Most High? His look, his voice, his gestures, his words, all were in accordance; and bespoke in the most commanding manner the man of God. How different his addresses to the people from those of the doctors of the law—those who held forth in the synagogue. How pungent were his words? As a prophet what was his theme? He announced the speedy coming of the Messiah. He could make no more important announcement than this; and the proof that he was a prophet “sent from God”—not a mere wild enthusiast, would appear from the actual coming of the so long expected Messiah,—the “King of the Jews.”

The great excitement prevailing, the rumors that were flying abroad, the announcement of the Messiah, reached Sepphoris, and came to the ears of Herod Antipas. His curiosity, if not his fears, would be naturally aroused by the last particular. Has that long expected personage appeared—or, is he about to appear soon, who is not only to absorb the kingdom of Judah but all the kingdoms of the earth? Will Herod be called upon to relinquish his tetrarchy? The preaching of John the Baptist soon dispelled the fears of Antipas, as to any present change in the political constitution of Judea—while the exhortations of the prophet to a holy life deeply impressed his heart. He had one serious,

and, as it proved, fatal difficulty in the way of a thorough amendment of life; this was his unlawful connection with Herodias. John insisted on a separation; it was absolutely indispensable to righteousness of life. Antipas hesitated, but he was bound too fast to escape. His conviction was strong, but his passions were stronger. He gave up the contest; and from this time, so far as Herodias was concerned, a deadly enmity ensued. Herodias, partaking rather the revengeful qualities of her grandmother, Salome, sister of Herod the Great, than the milder virtues of her mother Berenice, pursued the prophet with unmitigated hostility; she thirsted for his blood; and could she have induced Antipas to seize his person, John would have perished sooner than he did. But a cordon of hearts surrounded the man of God; and for a time the malice of Herodias proved ineffectual. While in the full tide of popularity, while the Sanhedrin quailed before his lightning words,—while the whole land actually trembled as if in fear of the righteous judgments of God, denounced against it by a tongue that was not afraid to speak the truth, Herod Antipas, with all his power, and incessantly urged by Herodias, did not dare to seize the person of the prophet, and put him to death. Secret plots against his life were laid, but these failed also. How could he die whose great mission was, the greatest ever given to man, to introduce to our world the Lord of life and glory. What was Herod in the hand of God but an instrument to do his will. He could go no farther than he was permitted; even his wiles must fail for the present.

We may easily suppose that acrimonious words were spoken in the palace at Sepphoris. Perhaps Herodias berated the pusillanimity of Antipas. A woman of strong passions, of high, ungovernable temper, it is very likely that she did. Antipas retorted, and hard, bitter words were bandied between the two. In these wordy contests Herodias came off as we may conclude, usually, if not always, victorious. Antipas was enslaved by his love to this woman; and no doubt promised again and again to satisfy her thirst for vengeance. The various plots against the life of the prophet show this. What Antipas did in this way was with an alarmed conscience; he was fully persuaded that John was a good man. He was further satisfied that he had nothing to fear from an undue use of the power that the prophet swayed over the people, whatever different view Josephus may take of this subject. Herod saw clearly that the preaching of John tended to reformation, not reconstruction. Beside, his own conscience told him that the reproofs of John were just; so that all he did against the prophet was with an alarmed conscience; and he did but yield to the overpowering influence of Herodias. As yet the great person foretold had not appeared; expectation was high, and Antipas shared in the feverish solicitude with the rest. For a moment there was stillness in the land; in Sepphoris, and in all the cities of Galilee and Judea—among the high as well as the low—all awaited anxiously the wished for hour. Suddenly Christ appeared on the scene; and the second act in the grand drama begins.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE EXTENT OF THE TETRARCHY OF HEROD ANTIPAS.

THE tetrarchy of Herod Antipas is singularly interesting from its relation to the word of prophecy. Galilee, and the Gentile country adjacent to it and environing it, north, east, west, is spoken of prophetically as a land of light; as the region on which the day-spring from on high would shine with peculiar effulgence. Hundreds of years before the times of which we write—before the ten tribes were carried into captivity by Tiglath Pileser and his son Salmaneser, (the capture of Samaria by Salmaneser occurred [B. c. 721], in the fourth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah) Isaiah the prophet, foreseeing the desolation of the land, spake of a bright future in which Galilee would be the source and center of light, and declared that thence would emanate a glory which would irradiate the whole earth. The light should not be confined to the narrow limits of Judea, but would be communicated to the surrounding heathen nations.

The light which it was foretold should shine on Galilee—that highly favored region—that soil marked by the footsteps of Elijah and Elisha—was to be a “great light.” Great light indeed! God himself incarnated, had chosen it for his destined residence on earth. Je-



rusalem and Judea might receive occasional visits, but the land of Galilee was selected as his permanent home. Even during his ministry of three years and a half, but a small portion of his time was spent out of the district of Galilee. Nazareth, a town in this district, was his home, as we have seen, during the greater part of his life. Hence, in a prophetic sense, Jesus as the Messiah is described as "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." It was one of the distinctive appellations of Christ. So well in a popular sense was this understood, that we find him addressed by those who appealed to him for miraculous aid—believing that it was in his power to bestow such aid—as "Jesus of Nazareth." An appeal thus made could not be resisted; it was acknowledged as a legitimate claim; "Jesus of Nazareth" carries with it the same power as when Jesus was addressed as the "Son of David."

This remarkable prophecy, delivered over seven hundred years before it was literally fulfilled, is thus worded:

"The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." \*

The ethnarchy of Herod Antipas included this land—this singularly favored region where Christ would for the most part dwell during his brief sojourn on our earth. Within these bounds in general, but especially

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\* Isaiah ix, 1. 2.

in particular localities within these limits, would his chiefest works be performed. It would be demonstrated by those works—such as no man ever did or could do—that God was indeed on the earth, and that he dwelt, in human form, among the children of men.

Only five days before his death, Herod the Great having altered his will, Galilee and Perca (that is the country beyond the Jordan) fell to the lot of Herod Antipas. Before this Antipas instead of Archelaus had been granted the kingdom of Judea; the change which his father made in his will just before his death, left his portion as stated above. Antipas contested the will before Augustus, but Augustus, as we have already seen, confirmed the division of Herod. Antipas quietly submitted; and when his brother Archelaus was deposed, he retained his government.

Galilee was divided into two parts, called the Upper and the Lower Galilee. They were encompassed about by Phenicia and Syria. On the west Galilee was bounded by the territory belonging to Ptolemais, and by Carmel; on the south it was bounded by Samaria and Scythopolis, as far as the river Jordan; on the east by Hippene and Gadaris, and also Gaulanitis; its northern portion was bounded by Tyre and the country of the Tyrians.

The line between Upper and Lower Galilee extended in length from Tiberias to Zebulon, and so across the country to the vicinity of Ptolemais; but Galilee did not include this ancient seaport; neither, at this present time (though once this was the case) did it include Mount Carmel. The two Galilees are spoken of by Jo-

sephus as of "great largeness;" the Galileans he describes as courageous and warlike; the soil of Galilee as "universally rich and fruitful," and "full of the plantations of trees of all sorts." As for the cities and villages, he says that they "lie very thick"—that "the very least village contained above fifteen thousand inhabitants.\*"

Of Perea he thus speaks: "Now the length of Perea is from Macherus (this was on the Dead Sea) to Pella, and its breadth from the river Jordan eastward to the cities of Philadelphia and Gerasa."† Perea was much larger in extent than Galilee; the olive tree, the vine, and the palm-tree were chiefly cultivated. Perea was well watered "with torrents which came down from the mountains;" it had also never-failing springs, which in the months of summer, when the torrents ceased, never were dry.

Diverging a little, we would say, there was a city of Galilee, on the lake of that name, called Bethsaida which had nursed two brothers of that hardy class of men for which Galilee was distinguished. Their names were Andrew and Simon, surnamed Peter. In this city on the lake they drew their breath; they became well-known afterward. There were also, of the same hardy class, two brothers, John and James, who lived in a village, on the shores of the same lake, called Capernaum. Little knowing the destiny that awaited them—inured to toil, active, industrious, vigorous—the four pursued their calling as fishermen, and became united

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\* Jewish War, book iii. ch. iii. sec. 1, 2.

† Ibid. sec 3.



as partners. Two of them, we know, were married—very likely all four. Andrew and Peter, leaving Bethsaida, came to Capernaum, and they all dwelt in the same village. The elements of their nature were homogeneous, and a happy harmony reigned among them. During the years that we have gone over—while Antipas ruled Galilee, while Jesus lived as yet unrecognised under the paternal roof in Nazareth, passing from youth to manhood—these had been growing up also. Obscure they were—little known out of their respective villages. They were all, at the time John the Baptist appears on the stage, in their prime; and were among those who were sedulous attendants of his ministry. They all four drank into one spirit; were baptized, confessing their sins, and became prominent disciples of John. Thus a new tie was added; their friendship assumed a higher form; it took a more sacred name. They shared alike in the hopes of the Messiah, excited by the discourses of their master; they ranged themselves by his side.

Happy fishermen—dwellers in this land of promise—happy in your associations, your views, your hopes.—Happy roofs under which you lived. Your homes so dear you will be called to leave; not to engage in war—for which Galileans were ever ready—but to embark in the highest of all callings—to gain immortal names—and to leave a deathless heritage to posterity, even the knowledge of life eternal.



## Book Fourth.

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### CHAPTER I.

TIBERIUS IN CAMPANIA. [A. D. 27.]

JOHN the Baptist, it will be remembered, was at this time preaching in Judea. He commenced about the time of the paschal feast,\* in the preceding year—[A. D. 26] the year in which Tiberius left Rome.

There accompanied the emperor Cocceius Nerva, a senator of consular rank, celebrated for his legal knowledge—also Sejanus and Curtius Atticus, a Roman knight. The rest were mostly Greeks, men of literary reputation, whose “talents amused him in his hours of leisure”† The name of one of these Greeks was Zeus, the name of another was Seleucis; he was a grammarian.‡ He took with him also Thrasyllus, the astrologer.

Tiberius tarried in Campania sometime, going from place to place. He had here a narrow escape of his life while dining in a natural cave on the sea shore,

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\* Prid. Con. Part 2. An. 26.

† Tac. An. book 4, sec. 58.

‡ Suet. Life Tib. sec. 56.

when the stones at the entrance of the cave fell in. Some of the attendants were crushed; the guests were alarmed, and fled for safety; Sejanus alone, "to protect his master, fell on his knees, and with his whole force sustained the impending weight,"\* till relief came. His disregard of himself, the imminent peril to which he was exposed to save Tiberius, made Sejanus more than ever all powerful. How could Tiberius doubt a friendship thus tested? †

While, during the year of our Lord 27, Tiberius with his train remained in Campania, an amphitheatre for the exhibition of gladiators, fell, and killed or maimed not less than fifty thousand. The building had been erected at Fidene a small town six miles from Rome. All the houses of the great in Rome were opened to receive the sufferers; and all vied with each other in acts of hospitality. It seemed like a return to primitive manners. ‡

Following this calamity, Mount Cælius was reduced to ashes. A great part of the city was thus destroyed; people's minds were much moved; and they said the prince departed from Rome under an evil constellation.\*

Though the people wished his return, Tiberius did not return. In the course of this year, he crossed over to the island of Capria; and took up his residence there for the rest of his reign, making some ten years.

The year after, [A. D. 26], he left the island on a sailing party, coasting along the Campanian shore, but

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\* Tac. An. book 4, sec. 59.

† Ibid. sec 62.

‡ Ibid. sec. 64.

not entering the Tiber, nor approaching even the suburbs of the city. The principal men of Rome flocked to the shore; sleeping out at night and "humbly waiting" through the day to get a word or a smile from Tiberius or his minister. Soon Tiberius set sail for his island; and "the whole herd," says Tacitus, "returned to Rome;" some dejected because they had not been noticed, others, elate with joy, because favored with perhaps a look or passing word.\*

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## CHAPTER II.

### AGRIPPINA AND HER SON NERO

DURING the years briefly noticed in the preceding chapter, Sejanus, following out his dark plan, encouraged by the favor of Tiberius, which had become yet more marked since the minister saved his life, pursued with his wiles Agrippina and her son, Nero. The mother must be removed; so must also the son. Undetected he grew bolder in crime, and was particularly pleased when he found that the death of Drusus passed with hardly a comment. Even Tiberius did not seem severely to feel the loss of his son. As for Livia, the faithless wife, she still aided the plans of Sejanus by the influence which she exerted over her own daughter,

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 74.

Julia, who was married to Nero. Not satisfied with what she had already done, with the wickedness she had hitherto committed, she engaged her own daughter in a conspiracy against Nero, her husband; and by her daughter's unfavorable reports, conveyed through the mother to Sejanus, Tiberius was more and more inflamed against his grandson. Sejanus artfully induced the emperor to believe the very worst of the inimical disposition of this young man.

Just before Tiberius left Rome, through the machinations of the minister, Sejanus, a prosecution commenced against Claudia Pulchra, a near relation and very dear friend of Agrippina's, made it evident to all that the widow of Germanicus was marked out for destruction. The prosecution was regarded "as a prelude to the fate of Agrippina." Agrippina flew to Tiberius, and besought him to save her friend; but in vain. Pulchra was condemned.

Soon after this Tiberius visited Agrippina in her sickness. Looking long and steadily at him, she at length burst into tears. She asked permission of him to marry again; to this request the emperor made no reply. He saw in it, as he thought, "a spirit of ambition that looked proudly towards the imperial dignity."

Sejanus, through his agents, acting on the fears of Agrippina, led her to think that Tiberius sought an opportunity to take her off by poison. She was cautioned to avoid eating at the emperor's table. She gave heed to these evil suggestions, and when invited by Tiberius to eat some apples that stood near him,



she was alarmed, and without tasting the fruit, she gave it to the servant to take away. Tiberius was much displeased: he said to his mother, "Should this woman be treated with severity will any body wonder, when she now imputes to me the guilt of dealing in poison?"\* He little divined whose hand was in the cup: who was the arch-plotter of all this mischief: that it was his own familiar friend, to whom he opened his heart; and in whom he reposed unlimited trust.

In Campania, the same strategy against mother and son was employed. Nero was imprudent; his friends who through the young prince were "eager to grasp at power," advised him not to submit to the insolence of Sejanus; to rise up against his authority. Like Drusus, Nero began to speak freely; he used rash expressions; these were caught up by spies—even by the wife of his bosom, "and reported with exaggeration." Imprudent, but not criminal, the conduct of the emperor filled him with alarm. The emperor received the prince with a stern countenance, or with an ambiguous smile. Sejanus even induced Drusus, the brother of Nero, to join in the conspiracy. He "dazzled the imagination of the stripling," leading him to think that he would succeed to the empire when the ruin of his brother was completed.

The anger of Tiberius toward the young prince, as soon as known, was followed by the estrangement of the followers of the court; some "avoided his presence; others paid a formal salute, and coldly passed away."

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\* Tac. An. book iv, sec. 54.

The creatures of Sejanus treated him with railery and contempt. He lived in constant anxiety, and every day brought some new alarm.

Sejanus was preparing the way for arraigning both the mother and son before the senate; a proceeding sure to be followed by their condemnation. The next heir to the empire would thus be removed; and Sejanus be assured of complete success.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### TIBERIUS ON THE ISLAND OF CAPREÆ.

THE island of Capreæ, to which Tiberius had now retired for the remainder of his life, and which his vices and his cruelty have made memorable, is now known under the name of Capri. Its situation in the bay of Naples is very striking. Its appearance off the shore is described by Suetonius as bold and picturesque; it is "surrounded on all sides with rugged cliffs, of a stupendous height, and by a deep sea."\*

"The island," says the same writer, "was accessible only by a narrow beach." Tacitus says it had not a single port in the channel; † that is the channel by which it is separated from the promontory of Surrentum, and which is three miles wide. This narrow channel sepa-

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\* *Life Tib.* sec. 40.

† *An.* book iv. sec. 67.

rates the island from the main land. Of the climate, Tacitus says, "it is inviting: in the winter a soft and genial air, under the shelter of a mountain that repels the inclemency of the winds; in the summer the heat is allayed by the western breeze."\*

Tiberius, seeking isolation and retirement, liked the island, because there was no part where men could land unobserved by the sentinels. Here he could be "defended from all intrusion," and enjoy the solitude in which he so much delighted, and be sequestered from the world.† These were some of the "many circumstances suited to his humor."

As it respects the size of the island, "it lies four miles in length from east to west, and about one in breadth."‡ "The western part, for about two miles in length, is a continued rock, vastly high, and inaccessible from the seaside.§" This mountain, at the west end of the island, rises to the height of one hundred and ninety feet above the sea.|| "The eastern end of the island rises in precipices very near as high, though not quite so long as the western."¶

"Between these eastern and western mountains lies a slip of lower ground," running north and south, "hid with vines, figs, oranges, almonds, olives, myrtles and fields of corn," which make a lovely spot, and form the "most delightful little landscape imaginable, when surveyed from the top of the neighboring mountains."\*\* A

\* An. book iv. sec. 67.

† Ibid.

‡ Addison's Remarks on Italy.

§ Ibid.

|| Murray's Hand Book of South Italy and Naples.

¶ Addison's Remarks on Italy.

\*\* Ibid.



hill rises in the midst of this fruitful tract of land, on which probably was situated one of the twelve villas of Tiberius, perhaps that of Jovis, or Jupiter, mentioned by Suetonius. There are still to be seen ruins on the side of this hill.

One of the twelve villas (they were named after the twelve principal heathen deities) stood on the very extremity of the high eastern mountain. There are remains of this villa yet to be seen; apartments very high, and arched at the top. From this villa, situated on this high mountain at the extreme eastern end of the island, Tiberius looked out on the green promontory of Surrentum. From hence was seen, "built on a promontory which projects out into the sea," \*Herculaneum, and next to it Pompeii, washed by the river Sarno."† Pompeii at that time stood on the sea, though the sea is now at some distance.‡

The island, from the high hills on each end, commanded a fine view of the bay of Naples. There rose, in the distance, Vesuvius, which, with the exception of the summit, was covered with very beautiful fields.§ There was to be seen, also, Neapolis, (Naples) Puteoli, || or, Dicæarchia, Baiæ, and Cumæ.

Near to Cumæ was the promontory of Misenum; and at the very foot of the promontory, in a harbor, one of the two Roman fleets was stationed; the other was stationed in the Adriatic Sea, at Ravenna.¶ From the

\* Strabo, book v. ch. 4, sec. 8.

† Ibid. ‡ Ruins of Ancient Cities.

§ Strabo book v. ch. 4, sec. 8.

|| Modern name Pozzuoli.

¶ Tac. An. book iv. sec. 5.



high hill, on the west, Tiberius could see his fleet anchored at Misenum.

The entire circumference of the bay of Naples was covered with buildings; villas, temples, and villages, or towns, connected with each other. The shore, also, was replete with classic fable; and all the fairy scene was before the eye of Tiberius.

On this island, at the age of sixty-eight, Tiberius gave himself up to his, as Tacitus styles them, "voluptuous pleasures." They are not fit to be named. Suetonius gives some account of them.\*

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## CHAPTER IV.

### DEATH OF LIVIA: AGRIPPINA AND NERO VOTED PUBLIC ENEMIES. [A. D. 29. 30.]

IN the year of our Lord twenty-nine, died Livia, the mother of Tiberius, "styled Julia Augusta." Her age is variously stated at eighty-two, eighty-six, eighty-seven, years. Dion Cassius states her age at eighty-seven, Pliny, eighty-two; † another authority, eighty-six. She survived Augustus fifteen years,—about the same period that Augustus survived Herod the Great. Thus actor after actor, living at the time of the birth of Christ, passes away; but their names are indelibly

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\* Life T. 13, 44.

† Book 14, sec. 6.

associated with that great event; and you may as well attempt to obliterate the action of the waves on the rocks which line the seashore, as to hide this historic fact. It stands forth as the sun at noon day; it is engraved as on a rock; it forms one of the facts of the most memorable age of history.

Of Livia, the empress mother, Tacitus says: "Her domestic conduct was formed on the model of primitive manners." As a wife, it would seem, as if amid the general demoralization, she conducted herself well; and did not forfeit the confidence of Augustus. She possessed popular manners, and made herself loved by the people at large. It is said that the senate, at her death, ordered an arch to be raised to her memory, and decreed that she should be called the mother of her country, for the many beneficent acts that she had performed. Among instances of her beneficence, as well as to show the amiableness of her disposition, we are told, that, through her intercession with Augustus, she saved the lives of several members of the senate; brought up their children; and contributed to the marriage of many of their daughters.\*

There is no doubt that she advised Augustus to pursue a conciliatory policy, and so to heal the wounds made by the civil wars, and that Augustus was greatly influenced in his course by her advice. The effects proved to be most salutary; and many years before his death his enemies were disarmed by the conciliatory course he pursued, and at length all breaches were

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\* Dion Cassius vol. i. p. 239.

healed. The rancour of civil war was forgotten; the empire was at peace within and without; and but one fear occupied men's minds—the change that might arise from the death of Augustus. As firm, if not firmer than Augustus in the affections of the Roman people, was his wife Livia, Julia Augusta, the empress mother.

A change came over her life ere she died. Her son Tiberius, the emperor, proved ungrateful. Livia was too exacting, and her son could not bear it. She tyrannized as empress in everything. She insisted that her name should be put jointly with that of Tiberius in the public register.\* All powerful under Augustus, she could not endure that there should be any diminution of influence, or that her weight of authority should be less than during the reign of her husband. Tiberius would not submit to her dominancy; and “at length removed her entirely from the management of affairs.” “During the whole course of her illness Tiberius made her no visit, nor assisted at her funeral.”† She had been guilty of participating in at least one murder to elevate her son to the empire, and her crime came back to her own bosom in the end. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Let none think that he can escape retributive justice. There is an eye that never sleeps, and the scales are poised in the hand of unerring rectitude and truth.

Livia was buried in the mausoleum of Augustus, and placed by the side of him who had loved her so well—

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\* Dion Cassius, vol. i. p. 117.

† Ibid. p. 238.

whatever might happen to be the real measure of her affection for him.

The death of Livia exposed Agrippina and her son Nero to the full wrath of Tiberius and his minister, Sejanus. Hardly were the funeral ceremonies over, ere Tiberius, in a letter to the senate, denounced Agrippina and her son. There was no imputation of treason against Nero, but "the crimes objected to him were unlawful pleasures, and a life of riot and debauchery."\*

This was a singular charge for Tiberius to make against his grandson, when he himself, on his island, carried his dissipations to such lengths, that a new name was given to a certain class of men who invented new forms of libidinous pleasure.

The crime alleged against Agrippina was, "her haughty carriage and unconquerable pride."

Upon the reception of this letter, "arraigning the conduct of Agrippina and her son, Nero," the senate was struck with astonishment, and knew not how to act. Upon motion of Junius Rusticus, "who was supposed to be in the secrets of his master," the consideration of the contents of the letter was postponed, and the senate adjourned their sittings without coming to a conclusion. Tiberius when informed of this was exceedingly angry: took the senate to task; and explicitly charged Agrippina and Nero with conspiracy against the state. Sejanus inflamed Tiberius the more, saying that the soldiers threatened a revolt, and that Nero was already considered as the head of the empire.

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\* Tac. An. book v. sec. 3.



The senate, without much further consideration, after a short debate, declared that the mother and son were public enemies. There was no trial; the simple denunciation of the emperor sufficed for their condemnation. Their case was prejudged; and what had a servile senate to do but ratify a foregone conclusion? Whether innocent or guilty, in reality, was of little moment.

The mother and son were seized, loaded with fetters, and conveyed in a close litter, "which not a ray of light could penetrate," towards the coast of Campania. Nero was banished to the island of Pontia, in the Tuscan sea; his unhappy mother was confined in a castle near Herculaneum, on the margin of the sea. Tiberius, from the high hill, on the east end of the island, could see the castle in which the widow of Germanicus was confined; as for herself, when night came on, if permitted to lookout from her prison, she could see the lonely watch-light, "the Pharos of Capreæ," sending to the sailor its cheerful beams—but conveying no comfort to her desolate heart.

Nero was twenty-nine years of age when what has been narrated took place.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN.

WE place the baptism of Christ somewhere about the time of the death of Livia, whence, according to Tacitus, "may be dated the era of a furious, headlong, despotic government." During the life of Livia Tiberius was kept under some restraint; but after she was no more there was no one to exercise any control; and both the prince and his minister broke out with unbridled fury.\* Agrippina and Nero felt the first effects of this fury. Next the most intimate friends of his mother were devoted to destruction; especially those to whom she had recommended the care of her funeral.† Rome, also in the meantime, knew no pause from the rage of persecution. Seneca says, "Nothing was safe, no place secure; informers spread terror and desolation through the city, and all ranks were swept away in one common ruin."‡

We turn from these scenes, to Judea; from the island of Capreæ, on which [A. D. 30] Tiberius had spent above three years, indulging himself in every vice;§ from

\* An. book v, sec. 3.

† Ibid. sec. 2.

‡ De Beneficis, lib. iii. cap. 26.

§ Supplement to Tacitus. There is a gap here in the *Annals* of Tacitus. Part of the year of Rome, 782, all 783, and the greater part of 784 is lost.

the deserted palace on the Palatine hill. Antonia, it is true, still remained in Rome, and occupied the palace, but the splendor and bustle of the court were gone. Only attendants were seen on the marble steps leading into the Via Sacra. The gardens of Adonis, adjoining the palace, were also, for the most part, empty. Still, solitary, was all around. Little joy was there in the city: confidence was gone: spies and informers lurked in ambush. Even those who, in the many eating houses, having drank too freely of wine, spoke an unguarded word, (Seneca mentions this) were reported; and death followed. From this gloom and horror we turn to a spot and a scene resplendent with light; from the Tiber to the banks of the Jordan; from imperial Rome to Judea captive.

In the year twenty-nine we may place the baptism of Christ; the year of the banishment of Nero to the island of Pontia; and the imprisonment of Agrippina in a castle near Herculaneum.

What an hour was that, in the history of our world, when Jesus left the seclusion of Nazareth for the scene of the baptism of John, his forerunner, on the banks of the Jordan. Then the darkness which had so long brooded over our world began to retire; then hope, nearly faint and despairing, plumed her wing for a higher flight; then the soul first felt the breath of a new life; then was fanned a flame that shall never expire. On the road, the dusty road, he walked from morn till eve—resting at noon, as afterwards, on the curb of Jacob's well during the heat of the day. It was the season of vintage; the joyful season of the year;

when each vineyard resounded with the song and shouts of the treaders of grapes; when from the wine-fat the blood-red juice flowed forth in glowing abundance. The sun poured down his fervid beams upon the dusty plain, with scarce a passing cloud, during the livelong day, to screen the solitary traveler as he wended his way, slowly, with perhaps a staff in his hand, musing on his high mission, contemplating the glory which should accrue from its complete fulfilment. At length, from some overhanging hill, the Jordan opened to his view, fringed by the acanthus, the oleander, the willow, and the tall bushes and rank grass which grew on its steep or shelving banks. Two thousand years had passed since the river had witnessed that act of omnipotent power when its waters divided of their own accord, and the tribes of Israel, with the ark of the covenant, passed over amid the sound of shawms and trumpets. Then the whole land shook and the waters were afraid. The same sacred stream is to witness a yet greater exhibition of power and glory, when the Son of God shall lave his human body in its waters; and from this point shall begin the grand work of human redemption.

This burial of baptism—commemorates it not, by anticipation, the burial of the body and the resurrection of the dead, whatever may have been the lapse of time since, or whatever the circumstances under which the decomposition of men's bodies may have taken place. The burial of baptism, and the sheen of rising up again out of the glassy wave, does it not point to the splendor of the new risen body, and its immaculate purity, with



the overthrow of death, and the removal forever of the dark habiliments of the grave. This solitary traveler who stands on yonder adjoining height, and looks down on the scene in the valley below, with the Jordan flowing between the opposite banks,—does he not contemplate a victory such as the world has not yet seen; a victory over death; a complete triumph over the gloom, the sin, the misery of earth and time; the rehabilitation of the world in more than its original splendor beauty, love and truth.

John had now pursued, according to the computation of Prideaux,\* his important ministry for the space of two years and a half. “He began it about the time of the paschal feast; and it was now the feast of tabernacles in the third year after.”† A year later he was cast into prison, and this burning and shining light was quenched in Israel. But he had then lived his full time, had done his great work, and his sun set without a cloud. He had ushered in the day of the world’s redemption, and saw the heavens ere he departed tinted with rosy light—a new day dawned indeed—to be followed by night no more. During all this period of three years and a half, he had testified to the speedy appearance of the Messiah in the land.

It must be remembered that as yet John had seen

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\* “The whole term of Christ’s ministry, while he was here on earth, as executed first vicariously by John, his forerunner, and afterward personally by himself, was exactly seven years; John three years and a half; Christ three years and a half more; and these seven years constituted the last of the seventy weeks in Daniel’s prophecy.” Prid. Con. An. 26.

† Ibid.

him not; he had no personal acquaintance with the Messiah. He says so himself: "I knew him not;" that is, he did not know him until he came to his baptism; and was pointed out by the Spirit, as had occurred with Simeon when Jesus as an infant was presented to the priest in the temple, according to the law of Moses, which required that the firstborn male child should be solemnly offered to the Lord. Thus it was that John, seeing Jesus coming to his baptism, knew who he was by a secret, divine intimation. The Holy Spirit said, "This is he: this is Jesus of Nazareth." When John was in the womb, and the voice of the virgin mother was first heard on the threshold of his mother's house, (this was the testimony of Elizabeth, the mother of John) "the babe leaped in her womb;" so now, John, taught of God, knows Jesus, as with slow step he approaches the water's edge. What were the feelings of John it would be impossible adequately to describe. On the one hand they were feelings of unbounded joy—on the other of holy awe. He knew well in whose presence he stood: even as Moses did, when a Voice sounded in his ear, out of the burning bush; while the bush remained unconsumed—sure proof that it was God who spake to him from the midst of the fire. Gladly would John have fallen prostrate at the feet of Jesus. To the eye of his inspired forerunner the Deity shone forth in the human body of Jesus, with a splendor more dazzling than that of the fire which surrounded the Godhead in the wilderness of Sinai. Then came to his ear from one of the mountains of Moab which overlook this sacred plain, those words spoken by Balaam

the prophet, which thus, in the most glowing language foretold the appearing of the Jewish Messiah in our world.

“I shall see him but not now: I shall behold him but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.\* And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Israel shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.”†

God had prepared the mind of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, for a most remarkable authentication of Jesus, as the Messiah. It was not sufficient that by a secret intimation, he should be enabled, in a crowd, to distinguish him from a thousand others at a single glance of the eye, and to know assuredly that it was he who was the “Sent” of God, but he had a much more wonderful manifestation to make, a visible sign to show clear as the sun at noonday. Thus when the great God would authenticate the law to be divine, he came down from heaven, and made his presence known on Mount Sinai,—by a thick cloud on its summit—by thunderings and lightnings that proceeded from the cloud—by the shaking of the mountain to its base,—and by the sound of a loud voice, which filled with solemn awe and dread those by whom it was heard. So

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\* Sheth, means enemies in general. See *Gos. Heb. Lex.* on the word.

† Numb. xxiv. 17, 18, 19.



now when, in the person of Jesus Christ, he is to make a manifestation of "grace and truth"—of "grace upon grace," he has a great sign to show from heaven, not, as on the former occasion, to the multitude at large,—but to John, his forerunner, on the strength of whose testimony he was to be declared the Messiah to the assembled people of Israel.

Was the law given on Sinai to be rescued from interpolators, by the testimony of assembled Israel—from those who would weaken its authority—from those who would say it was the work of man and not of God—who would deny its divine origin—and shall not God give to his chosen servant an incontestable sign, on the strength of which he may assuredly declare "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," to be the "Son of God?" A sign from heaven was given of the most signal kind. God, it is true, did not descend in a thick cloud, amid fire and smoke—he spake not with a voice louder than the loudest thunder—he shrouded not himself in blackness and tempest—but the heavens themselves were opened, even as a curtain is parted, and what appeared to be a dove descended from the sunlit sky—a white-winged dove—and alighted on the head of Jesus, as he stood with John on the banks of the Jordan after his baptism—remaining stationary there, amid an effulgence that dazzled the eye. John had been prepared for this; the sign had been pre-announced, and minutely described; the Spirit was to descend from heaven in the form of a dove, to light upon and remain on his head. The Spirit of God, assuming this form, must have been glorious indeed. Ezekiel and Isaiah had



seen remarkable manifestations of the glory of the Lord; John, the forerunner of Jesus, saw that glory in a light no less significant and distinct than the rest, but in a sweet, mild form. The Godhead in this form descended and took possession of the man Christ Jesus, even as the cloud of the divine glory descended and took possession of the tabernacle at the time of its dedication. This was the anointing of the Holy One spoken of by Daniel, and filling Jesus with the fullness of God. John saw the amazing sight; this luminous display; this heavenly coruscation. It was as if he had been admitted into heaven; or, with the prophet Isaiah had seen "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."\* Was the scene less dazzling because it was on the earth? On and around the spot where the two stood, the glory of the Lord shone as afterward on the mount of transfiguration. What was earth with its vain glory then? What sensual delights? What the food of earth, with the endless craving which it creates? What all the world gives to its most favored votaries who exhaust its whole stock? What the voice of fame? Here was an emanation from heaven itself; a glory proceeding directly from God. Grief, do thou retire! Tears—let them be washed away! Hope, dawn again on our benighted world! Prophets and patriarchs, sainted kings and sainted heroes rejoice—the day you looked forward to is come; the battle for which you fought is won; your tears are dried up forever; your sad moans, which

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\* Isaiah vi 1.

so often broke the dull, heavy ear of night, like the lone, plaintive cry of the whippoorwill, are hushed, to be heard no more.

In addition to the descent of the Spirit of God upon Christ, (what form may not God assume?) there was heard by John a voice from heaven, which distinctly said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." \* Then the heavens were shut; the glory retired, probably by slow degrees, as the last rays of day linger on the mountain-tops, or are reflected from the surface of the glassy wave. With what holy regret did John leave the spot, consecrated by such a presence. As for Jesus himself, he was suddenly carried away by the Spirit, as by a whirlwind, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. So Elijah was carried as by a strong gust of the coming tempest from Carmel to Jezreel, hurried along by a power which he could not resist, and which was beyond the speed of horses driven to their swiftest pace.

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\* Matt. iii. 17.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CONFLICT IN THE WILDERNESS.

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?” Isa. lxiii. 1.”

“For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.” Ibid. ix. 5.

WE speak of what is real. Let those who disbelieve turn away, as they would have done in the wilderness of Sinai, when that “great sight” was presented to the wondering but adoring eye of Moses, the servant of Lord, of “a bush burned with fire, and yet the bush was not consumed.”\* Taught of God,—not deluded by sparks of his own kindling, Moses did not turn a disdainful ear to the Voice from the bush. When the Angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush, he did not refuse to hear the Voice that spake, but with reverent ear listened, amid the deep solemn hush of the wilderness. This was no chimera of the brain; no vision of the distorted fancy; it was an actual appearance of God to man; it was one of his modes of communication. And why should not God communicate with man, whom he has made almost equal with himself, and with whom he intends to share

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† Exod. iii. 2, 3.

his glory? It is man's own dullness of vision that interposes an obstacle to the sight and knowledge of God—that places God so far off—that does not perceive the actual nearness of his presence. Let the film of unbelief, of sordid lust, be removed from the interior eye, and then God will be seen walking in the garden as of old; his voice will be heard; and intercourse direct, personal, without opposing obstructions, will at once be opened between the creature, helpless and dependent, and the Creator. That will not be jargon, rhapsody, which speaks of God as dwelling with man—his companion and friend.

How shrouded in mystery is human life—the origin of being—the nature of the soul! What has philosophy taught on this subject? How empty are its speculations! To what do they amount? Who is any the wiser for them? They do but tend to make the gross darkness of the mind more visible.

Who can understand God or his ways! The existence of evil, of crime in our world, how, in every age it has baffled the deepest thinkers, the most philosophic minds! The best of men among the heathen, Socrates, entirely despaired, toward the close of his life, of finding any remedy for sin and crime, and the innumerable ills which follow in their train, unless the gods themselves should come to his assistance. And yet it was the study of his whole life to find such a remedy; and he too confessedly the wisest of them all. In his despair, God sent into his mind a ray of light; and he was taught where to look for effectual succor—even to the appearance of the great God in our world. What



arm but that which "taketh up the isles as a very little thing" is able to accomplish such a work! What wisdom but that of the Infinite One can devise a plan which will be equal to the emergency.

These prefatory remarks are not irrelevant to the subject matter of this chapter. Who can follow the Son of God into the wilderness, and enter into the agony of that awful and mysterious conflict with the prince of darkness—the overshadowing power of evil. The pangs that were felt—those of a woman in childbirth are as nothing—(though this figure is often used by the sacred writers to describe them). The keen cry that rent the heavens can never be told. It was the cry of anguish of a soul bruised for sin; not for its own sins but the sins of others. It was the payment of the penalty of evil; the just and necessary payment. If God permitted sin to enter our world, he intended to expiate it in a way that should show its utterly evil and bitter nature, to the wonder of angels and men, and to the firm establishment of truth and righteousness on an everlasting foundation. It is a depth too deep for man to explore. Let the results in so far as they have been shown, and as they will yet be more fully shown, when the whole scheme is known, vindicate God.

The first of a series of dreadful conflicts with invisible powers began in the desolate wilderness. Earthly kingdoms are established by the sword, with "confused noise, and garments rolled in blood." Here is a battle fought in secret; and the wave that rushes along, the waters that toss themselves on high—that rage and roar—do but faintly indicate the dire distress which

the "Son of God," endured during the period of his fasting and temptation in the wilderness, when hotly pursued by the enemy of all righteousness, with a depth of ingenious malignity, and an inveteracy, well calculated to baffle and defeat any other being than God; but God in human form. Hence the miraculous conception of the holy child Jesus; hence his nativity, ushered in by angels and witnessed by shepherds, hence the wails of infancy, the helplessness of childhood; hence the adolescence of Jesus, the gradual expansion of his mind; the slow growth from infancy to manhood, that, in the guise of an heir of man, he might inflict a deadly blow on the original tempter, and, as man, redeem man: it belonging to the wisdom of God, and necessary to fulfil all righteousness, that the nature in which sin had been committed should suffer, and yet at the same time a perfect victory be achieved over all the wiles of the devil. When Christ came forth from the dread conflict of the wilderness, victorious, the kingdom of darkness received a fatal blow; thence its downfall began, to be followed by its sure and ultimate overthrow.

He must be dark indeed who does not see throughout the whole of the sacred writings the design of God to wage war with the kingdom of darkness; and to bring destructions to a perpetual end. Shall evil forever triumph? This is the problem to be solved by the Bible. What has the wit of man availed, in the six thousand years that have passed, since the introduction of sin into our world, to decide the contest, and to put an end to the power of evil? Is sin any the less rampant

now than when first it reared its deformed head? Not however, by a single blow, but, in the wisdom of God, by a succession of blows, is the final conquest to be achieved, leviathan to be pierced, the dragon to be slain, and the earth to be completely redeemed from the curse under which it has so long groaned. As then the first of a long series of conflicts with the powers of darkness which will eventuate in the overthrow of the power of sin and Satan in our world, must we regard the mysterious conflict in the wilderness. Jesus came out of it a conqueror; Satan retired from it vanquished; foiled at every point; beaten back at every attempt. In a similar conflict with the first man of our race he succeeded. Then was opened Pandora's box. Grim disease came out and stalked forth; pride, like that of Lucifer, rose up in the heart, and defied the Omnipotent; rage and fury, spread their arms, like the arms of giants, and sent fear and dismay wide abroad. The heart of man fell from a state of purity, and became the receptacle of every foul and hideous imagining; it lost even the power and the wish to discover what was holy and good. The soul became a fit cage for every unclean bird—for every vile and cancerous thing. The Second Man entered the lists: he was attacked by the same subtle and powerful foe, but he stood firm against every attack; he completely prevailed—he beat down Satan under his feet, and a new and heavenly life began; the heart of man became once more the chosen abode of purity; the seat and residence of God. Thence the tide flowed back, and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth became the life of the soul. But recollect,

reader, that this victory was won by the soul's deepest anguish—in the exercise of such agonizing prayer, such deep, mental conflicts with the rulers of the darkness of this world, as to be likened to a victory obtained by “burning and fuel of fire.” Not rhetorical is this language. In the solitary wilderness Jesus walked; day and night, weary and faint; at last nearly famished with hunger, and expiring with thirst, he planted his feet firmly on the word of God, and was sustained by that alone—and not by any self-sustaining sufficiency. When he came out of the dreadful contest with Satan and h. ll. having driven the battle to the gates, stained was his raiment—blood was sprinkled on his garments—red was his apparel, but he had come off victorious, and the earth revived once more, and man breathed freely again, as when the dove brought in her mouth to the ark a fresh olive leaf, plucked off the newly grown olive tree.



## CHAPTER VII.

JESUS PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS THE JEWISH MESSIAH, BY HIS FORERUNNER, JOHN THE BAPTIST, IN THE PRESENCE OF A DEPUTATION SENT FROM THE SANHEDRIN AT JERUSALEM.

THE scene of strange, mysterious conflict, to which we have adverted in the preceding chapter, occurred, as we conceive, in the wilderness of Sinai. There God tried his people of old; there they were tried as by fire. How often they failed, through unbelief, let their history tell. Even Moses, their leader, in a passion of indignation at the apostacy of the people, threw to the ground the two stones containing the decalogue, and dashed them to fragments. And once, committing a sin of deep dye, overcome by the subtilty of the devil, he forgot himself, and did not give glory to the God of glory. He took credit to himself; he was, for the moment, sufficient for himself. It was just the same as if he had given praise to a graven image, instead of to God, the maker and upholder of all things. This was the devil's original sin, the indulgence of a pride which detracts from God, and feels its own self-consequence. It was this idolatrous sin, persisted in, and not at once abandoned, as by Moses, which led to the expulsion of angels from their first happy estate—their bright and glorious abode. God will not give his glory to another;

nor his praise to graven images. Remember this, man, who settest thy nest on high—even among the stars. By every method Satan sought to excite pride, and to raise the feeling of vain emulation in the breast of the Son of man; Jesus was proof against every seductive artifice of his wily antagonist; having conquered so often in this self-same wilderness, Satan expected to conquer the “Son of God.” Moses fell by the wiles of the devil—but not Christ; and all the past defeats in that dreary wilderness, are now more than compensated.

Through Edom Christ came, driven along by the Spirit of God, as by the wind, to the wilderness of Sinai; he swiftly passed Bozra, one of its chief cities, as he was borne along; he returned more leisurely. He trod the ground that Israel slowly traversed, on its way at last, after the expiration of forty years, to the promised land. They did take possession; but afterwards lost it, through the same evil heart of unbelief that gave Satan the advantage over them so often in the wilderness. Now Israel's King is on his way, slowly travelling the same long, weary road, to inaugurate a new reign, to set up the throne of David anew, and (looking beyond a captivity of eighteen hundred years) to “raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, to raise up his ruins, and to build it as in the days of old.”\* This glorious spectacle revived his fainting spirit on the dusty way. He saw, in the far off future, the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He rejoiced in spirit as he saw the new

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\* Amos ix. 11.

Jerusalem descend from heaven as a bride adorned for the bridegroom. World, world! at what a price hast thou been bought. What thoughts must have filled the mind of the "Son of God", as he thought of the past history of his people; contemplated their still more wonderful future; and looked forward to the happy day when "in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."\*

Arriving once more on the ground where his forerunner still ministered to the people—still declared that Messiah would soon appear—nay, that he was already among them, though they knew him not,—Jesus took up his residence temporarily in an adjoining village. This village was not far from Bethabara the place where John then preached. Happy village that received the "Son of Man," in that early stage of his public career, before his name was bruited abroad, and while the dew of his youth was fresh upon him. Happy house that received under thine honored roof the Son of God! And happy inmates that sat at the same table, and listened to his discourse, who was himself the "living Bread, that cometh down from heaven." Happy nights, during which the Son of Man rested his

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\* Having finished what we had to say in regard to the "Conflict in the Wilderness," we remark that Milton, with great propriety, bases his "Paradise Regained," on the issue of this contest. As that went, so would the whole go: and as that was decisive for Christ, so would he be completely victorious over his great adversary, the devil, in the end. As it respects the scene of the temptation, we may farther remark, "the tradition which regards the mountain Quarantina, as the place of our Lord's temptation, appears not to be older than the age of the Crusades." Rob. Palestine, vol. ii. p. 303.

head under that roof—sleeping at night—rising in the early morn. Memorable days and memorable nights—though but little trace of them is left on the unerring page, in the brief history of the Son of Man.

The people had begun to grow weary of the reiterated declarations of John the Baptist, that the expected Messiah would soon appear. Two years and a half had passed, and the Messiah did not come; and the inquiry arose, “Is not John the Baptist the expected Messiah?” Among other enigmatical things that John had said, (enigmatical in the then state of their minds) was this, “After me there cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me.”\* Had they understood these words, it would have settled the vexed question: for John, divinely illuminated, filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb, spake here of the existence of the man Christ Jesus as God, and that as God, he was indeed “before him”—existing from eternity. Furthermore, he had again and again, in the course of his ministry, spoken of the baptism of Jesus in contradistinction from his own: these were the words: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”† Here were statements wholly at variance with the opinion that John was the Messiah. But the people did not understand, neither did they sufficiently weigh the expression. The baptism of the Holy Ghost—what was that? What did this

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\* John i. 30.

† Matt. iii. 2.



mean? Who was this coming personage, of whom so great a prophet—hardly, if at all inferior to Moses in the power and authority with which he spoke—had said, “whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” Not worthy to bear his shoes? Could this be spoken of other than God? Would it be proper, or consonant with truth, thus to speak of any created being—even to the highest archangel? Most surely not. Here is no flower of poesy, but plain, downright speech. Then, again: Who is this, of whom John says, “He that cometh after me is mightier than I?” In what does this greatness consist? Is it the might of a warrior’s arm in the day of battle? Is it human might? Or, does John speak of the “Mighty God,” not with the uplifted thunderbolt in his hand, not as seen in the whirlwind, or fire, or earthquake, but in the bestowment upon man of the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift should demonstrate, in a new, unheard of manner, to a wondering world, who Jesus was. This should prove in the most direct way, that Jesus was indeed God. The Holy Ghost himself would convincingly testify to this great fact. Elijah, wrapped in his mantle, and with his face to the base of the rock of Horeb, saw prospectively the manifestation of God in the flesh—the embodiment of grace and truth. This was the low voice that whispered mercy to his distressed and burdened heart; that spoke in accents softer and more melodious than the æolian harp. The soft night wind never came more soothingly to the human heart; never touched the chord of sympathy more gently. What became of the griefs of Elijah after the sound of this low, soft, sweet

voice, falling so lovingly on his entranced ear? His sighs, his plaintive sighs, whither had they fled? The God of mercy had bound up all his wounds with a single word. John, who came "in the spirit and the power" of Elijah of old, so understood the gift of the Holy Ghost—as going down to the bottom of human ill, and as finding a remedy for human grief in the renovation of the soul; restoring the image of God in man; rectifying the passions; and producing the most profound submission, in every circumstance of life, to the divine will; and in the annihilation of self, and the supreme glorification of the Creator: in a word, in the exaltation of God, and the voluntary abasement of man. The Holy Ghost, what is it but the power of God to rectify all that is wrong in man, and to prepare him to become the friend and companion, as he was originally designed to be, of his Maker. The gift of the Holy Ghost, the "promise of the Father," what is expressed by the use of these terms, apparently so mysterious, but the consummation of the work of God in the soul of man, and his highest elevation in the scale of being, forever. Has not God kept back his greatest gift to the very last?

Had the people understood the language of John the Baptist, they would not have been at a loss to know that he was not the Messiah. Entangled in speculations by the long delay, they were perplexed by their own groundless imaginings; for John had said plainly enough that the Messiah was yet to come. The same dreamy speculation and curious questioning, perplexed the Sanhedrin; and they also, not knowing what to

think, about the time of Christ's return from the wilderness, sent a special deputation to John, to inquire whether they were still to look, after so long a time, for one yet to come. What could John do but what he had done so often before, point them to the Messiah who was yet to come. But the period of protracted delay was now at an end, and ere they left the ground, he directed them to Jesus, standing now among them, as the Messiah; and in confirmation thereof detailed to them the sign which God had given, immediately following the baptism of Jesus :

"And John bare record, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God."\*

Thus it was with the shepherds of the plain. They had a sign given to them by which they might know assuredly, each one for himself, as he looked and saw the infant Jesus; Simeon, also, had a sign, no doubt, by which he might unmistakably distinguish the holy child; the Magi were guided by a star to the very place of his birth; and to John the Baptist, his forerunner, was given an amazing sign. How could doubt rest on his divinely inspired mind after this? What he saw and heard, that he declared. In the instances

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\* John i. 32, 33. 34.

that we have given, the signs came from heaven; there were no visible marks of power or authority in the child, or as yet in the man. He was, in appearance, as any other child; as any other man. The testimony that Jesus was the Messiah was built on the declarations of angels, and what the individual witnesses saw and heard for themselves. There was, in each case, an actual fulfillment of what had been pre-announced: or else, such a signal token, as the star, for instance, that no doubt could rest on a divinely taught mind.

When John pointed out Christ as the Messiah, there was nothing in his outward appearance, in the circumstances by which he was surrounded, to attract, particularly, the public regard. There was on the other hand much to make what he said look dark and unintelligible. Jesus was alone—unknown—with no appearance of authority. It is true, he bore upon his person all the marks of prophecy; he was as a prince in disguise; but the people saw none of these outward indications of his rank and greatness. They were called to believe upon the testimony of John: "And I, John, saw and bear record, that this is the Son of God."

This was the peculiar characteristic in the presentation of Jesus to the people of Israel as their Messiah. Faith in the declaration of John as a prophet was required on the part of those who should receive and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, this would unfold him in their bosoms. Thus it is by faith that the mind is moulded into the image of Christ; we receive, in the exercise of a lively, active faith, the stamp divine on the soul. The exercise of faith in the word of God



spoken directly by himself, or by the mouth of all his holy prophets, is the process by which we are conformed to the image of the incorruptible God.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

ON the second day after the re-appearance of Jesus on the plain—the day after that on which Jesus had been pointed out as the Messiah, not only to the people, but also to the deputation from the Sanhedrin, as the sun was slowly sinking behind the high mountains on the west—as the day was declining, and long shadows were projected along the plain, forewarning of the approaching night, and the close of another day, John stood, with two of his disciples, in the shade perhaps of the high western hill. How grateful is the shade of great rock, or hill, from the burning sun, from his fierce beams. Jesus passed slowly along. After what John had publicly said the preceding day, we may readily imagine what an object of general attention Jesus must have been. What numerous inquiries were made! How closely was his person scanned! All his movements were watched—every eye was upon him!

This could hardly have been otherwise, in the very nature of the case. That there was a general feeling

of disappointment there can be no doubt. Had they studied carefully the word of God this would not have been the case. Why were not the shepherds disappointed? Why not the Magi? It was because they had been taught in a different school. After their long and wearisome journey, and great anticipations, they found the child Jesus in the very condition described by prophecy. They drew their conclusions, not from the vain ideas of man, governed by carnal wisdom, but from the teaching of God himself. They knew that in the great work of human redemption God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. They were content with the wisdom of God; with his plan. John saw that his testimony, so explicit, so unequivocal, had not produced the desired effect. On the afternoon in question he pointed out Jesus, in particular, to two disciples at his side, in connection with these significant words, "behold the Lamb of God!" How little those two disciples of his understood the meaning of these words. Words pregnant with meaning of deep and high import. The two disciples of John left their master and followed Christ. Thus a stream will diverge from the parent branch, and flowing in another channel, be lost, till both meet again in the mighty ocean. The three crossed the plain in company; many eyes following them till they were lost in the distance. And now night swiftly came on; the Jordan pursued its sinuous course; the distant cities of the valley—among others Phasaelis and Archelais. to the north of Jericho—were shut out from view; the opposite mountains, deepening the darkness of the valley, could be but

dimly discerned along the face of the sky; silence succeeded—day was gone. The world had seen its greatest day; redemption was begun.

In an adjacent village the rest of the day, (it was four o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus with the two disciples of John left the plain) and it may be the night was spent. The two accompanied Jesus, "and saw where he dwelt." They entered the house—they sat down—they partook with him the evening repast. It is not difficult to conceive how the hours were employed. This is made clear from the result of the interview, for as soon as it was over, one of the parties, by name Andrew, a fisherman of Galilee, dwelling on the lake of that name, (we have already briefly adverted to him) hastened to his brother Simon, and saluted him after this wise: "We have found the Messiah."\* We send vessels on distant voyages in search of precious cargoes: they return to us richly freighted; our warehouses are filled, and our stores are running over. The wharves are piled with our goods; the noble vessel having weathered many a storm, rides safely in harbor. We call our friends together; we make merry; we are elate with joy and hope. The future presents one long, unclouded day—and we expect ever to ride the topmost wave of prosperity. We are strangely blinded—singularly deceived; we are dazzled by a false light. What had these men found? They had found the Messiah, which in Greek is Christ—that is, the Anointed One of God—the appointed Deliverer of our race. This was

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\* John i. 41.

the treasure which they found during that ever memorable interview; this was the news which Andrew, on his return, communicated with a glad heart and free, to his brother and fellow-partner, Peter. This is the sum of Scripture testimony,—that Jesus is the Messiah. The book proves this or it proves nothing. Whatever the beauty of its poetry, the sublimity of its language, the excellence of its precepts, the soundness of its morality—however vivid many of its historic pictures—perfect specimens of word-painting,—all this would avail little, apart from the testimony which is furnished in every page, from the beginning to the end of the book, that Jesus is the Messiah. To testify of Christ is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”\* This condensates prophecy. Take this key and apply it to the Hebrew Scriptures and its most secret stores are opened,—every hidden repertory is disclosed to our view.

Jesus had culled the flowers of prophecy;—from the law of Moses, from the inspired Psalms of David, from the prophets, he had selected various passages, commented on them, and showed how they applied to himself. The circumstances of his birth, we may readily imagine, were dwelt upon; those also which preceded his birth; his miraculous conception,—in connection with the sign of deliverance given to Ahaz, king of Judea, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”† Reference we

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\* Rev. xix. 10.

† Isa. vii. 14.



may suppose, was made to his descent and parentage, as the son of David, as the son of Joseph. His long residence at Nazareth was adduced in proof, or rather in confirmation of his claim as the Messias. If we do not see this so clearly, they to whom he spake did. Jesus, we conceive, entered into various details; and their ears were opened to the reception of what he said. The tender, susceptible heart of one of the two, (John) how it must have melted, even as wax before the fire, at the words of Jesus.

Apart from the testimony adduced from the Scriptures, and accompanying facts to show that Jesus was the Messias, had they not also the oracular testimony of John? Is it not, also, highly probable, that many of the facts presented by Jesus, had reached their ears in their childhood and youth, and had greatly impressed their minds? The mother of John, had she not recounted them to her son? The mother of these two young men, Galileans and disciples of John, it is clear, had been prepared by previous religious training (even as the shepherds had been thirty years before) to receive and acknowledge Jesus as the Messias upon sufficient evidence. They weighed what they heard; they sought their proof in the Scriptures;—all that Jesus up to this time told them of himself, corroborated his words. It was left to the future to unfold, and more fully to confirm the word of prophecy as it respected Jesus; every day would furnish new developments: but for the present the proof was satisfactory, and they were satisfied. They returned to the ground on the following morning with this testimony on their lips,

“We have found the Messias.” John lost, Jesus gained two disciples. They were his first.

The breath of early morning blew sweetly and softly over the fragrant plain; and well it might. The day-spring from on high had visited our earth; the Sun of righteousness was soon to arise with healing in his wings. The carol of birds was sweet; sweeter than ever before. The music of the wind, was not low and plaintive, as a sighing dirge, but it broke on the ear with a sound of gladness, transporting the soul with joy. It was as if grief and care were gone; and the last cloud of earth had passed away. The river danced in its joyous course; the sun shone with new splendor. All nature betokened its joy in the presence of its author; and from each neighboring hill came the shout, heard far and near, “a King in the camp.” My heart why dost thou mourn? Why art thou so sad? Why do tears, poor sojourner, constantly flow down thy cheeks? Why art thou, O man, so heavy hearted, burdened, oppressed? Here is a balm for every wound, the name of “Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.” He came into the world to dry our tears; to relieve our heavy burdens; to comfort the disconsolate,—wake the song of joy anew in thy heart. Do not weep and sigh forever. The present testimony of Jesus is the consolation of wounded hearts! Thou art indeed the comfort of the distressed. This, mourner, is the testimony of Jesus,—the comforter, the consoler.

With joyful haste, on this fair morning, Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. The testimony of Andrew was received by his brother; he accredited

is. His heart, also, had been prepared by previous training, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, as he listened to his brother's account of the interview of the preceding evening. His doubts vanished; his fears were removed; he was convinced even before he saw Jesus. His brother's words found a ready response in his heart; and, perhaps, his regret was that he had not received the witness of John the Baptist. No sooner did Simon approach Jesus, than the latter, foreseeing the strength and energy of his faith, addressed him thus. "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas," or Peter.\*

What a word was this, from the "Son of God." Peter - a stone. We all know what this meant; to what it referred. It was a prophetic designation, similar to that which Jacob received, when he was surnamed Israel, because when he contended with the angel, he prevailed. It was the faith in God, in his word, of promise, which Jacob exercised, on this occasion, which gave him the cognomen of Israel, more illustrious than that of Asiaticus, or Africanus, which the Romans, in honor of their splendid achievements, gave to the two Scipios. And well did Simon, by his indomitable faith in Jesus as the Messiah, earn this illustrious title. To what did his heart cling as to this great fact? It was his life; the soul of all his actions. That Jesus was truly the Messiah - the "Sent" of God took the deepest hold of his understanding, and his will.

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\* John i. 42.



Let others disbelieve, he believed. He was free from fear, or doubt; he was absolutely "sure" of this. The light on this point, which he received, came down from God: it was a supernatural revelation, conveyed into his mind by the Holy Ghost.

It was his strong, unwavering faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, which gave such elevation to the character of Simon Peter. Like a noble vessel, struggling with storm and tempest, sinking now into the low trough of the sea, nearly submerged, and anon rising unharmed to the top of the highest wave, he presents a magnificent spectacle. What greater word than this can be spoken, when it proceeds from full, overflowing conviction, "Thou art the Son of God." There is life in this word, as in no other word; it gives wings to faith; omnipotence to prayer. The absence of it is death. With unconquerable tenacity Simon Peter held to his faith in Jesus as the Messiah; and has thus earned in the world's history a place among its heroes second to none. His is the meed of an honored name; not for feats in arms, not for the splendor of his talents, not for native genius, not for discoveries in science or art, not as a painter, or poet, but what is of infinitely more importance, and of more enduring value, for his indomitable, unwavering faith in Jesus, as the Messias, the Christ, the Son of God. "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, 'Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.'"

What a day of glory, truth, love, and power, was that to the two brothers, Andrew and Simon. All these hopes were garnered up in the Messias—the Messias



of their Scriptures;—and unlettered as they were, little acquainted with the philosophy of Aristotle, or the language, literature, or history of the Greeks (they knew but one language) they knew there was but one hope for the redemption of the world, and that was to be found in Christ. They had already learnt the force of these words,—“To whom shall we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life.” It was not to philosophy, letters, or art, or poesy, or discoveries in science, that they were to look, not to the highest flights of eloquence, to the orations of Demosthenes or Cicero, not to the unfoldings of the most argumentative minds,—but to the Messiah of the Jewish Scriptures for the knowledge of the remission of sins—for true peace—for the resurrection of the dead—the removal of the curse from our earth, the obliteration of fear and sin and life everlasting.

Their vessel anchored safely here—rode gaily that day. Storms were to be encountered on a troubled ocean; but for the present, all was calm, joy, hope, peace.

Another sun descended, and night cast its canopy, glittering with stars, over the silent plain. Many a city on either side of the valley sank from bustle and glare into the silence and shade of night. The multitude, attendant on the ministry of John, slept mostly on the ground, wrapped in their mantles. Jesus himself retired, as on the previous night, to the adjacent village.

It is hardly necessary to say any thing further on this topic. On the third day after his shewing unto Israel, Jesus, with five disciples, taken from among the

followers of John the Baptist, his forerunner, set out upon his return to Galilee. The panoply with which these disciples were armed was the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. This constituted a complete suit of armor; sword, helmet, breastplate, shield, whatever was necessary either for aggressive or defensive warfare. Thus armed, they stood firm, invincible. They were warriors after God's own heart. The name of God was on their foreheads; the love of God was in their hearts; they were animated by divine zeal. They were not, it is true, as yet fully instructed; they had learned the first lesson of Christian doctrine. They had learned that Jesus was the Messiah; one and all, from supernatural conviction, had confessed this. This, up to this point of time, was the word of their testimony; they had yet to learn what was still more important—that the Messiah was Jehovah. These two points constitute the sum and essence of Christian doctrine. All the other vital parts are deduced from this source; they flow from it, and are merged in it. In the absence of the knowledge of the second point they must be called learners; when instructed in both heads of the "mystery" of Christ, they will be prepared to become teachers. When they shall have received "the promise of the Father," when they shall be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire"—when all shall have been fully confirmed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, then, with an unwavering faith, and a holy zeal, proportioned to this faith, they will say, unhesitatingly, "My Lord and my God."

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE MARRIAGE IN CANA OF GALILEE.

“And the mother of Jesus was there.” John ii. 1.

It is a matter of devout satisfaction, of holy reliance, in reading the records of the New Testament, that they are true. Whatever else is not true, these are true and faithful records. They are the records not only of holy men, but of men who spoke by the Holy Ghost. That they were holy men is the same as saying that they were honest; that they faithfully transcribed what they either saw or knew for themselves, or heard from those who were “eye witnesses” of what they reported. The soul is fed by the knowledge which it possesses that the facts in relation to “Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph,” are veritable narrations. “That,” says John, the beloved disciple, “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.” \*

On “the third day,” after his shewing unto Israel, the day on which, Jesus, with his disciples, leaving the Jordan, and the ministration of John, set out for Gali-

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\* 1 John i. 1---3.

lee, occurred a marriage festival in Cana, a village in the immediate neighbourhood of Nazareth. The festival which lasted seven days, began on the day on which Jesus and his disciples set out for Nazareth; this was the first day of the feast, a week would expire before the joyful solemnities would be concluded.\* Jesus, and his disciples would reach Nazareth, about the middle of the week, when the festival would be half over; but the mother of Jesus, attended through the whole of the feast. Possibly, with many others, she went in the morning, and returned to her own home in the evening, as the two villages were but a short distance from each other.† The guests were numerous, though it was, in all probability, a marriage in humble life. This would seem to be shown from the circumstance that the wine failed in the middle of the feast. Just at this juncture arrived Jesus in Nazareth; what had lately transpired in the valley may have reached his mother in advance of his return. But whether this was so or not, undoubtedly his mother, by a divine intimation, which the Holy Ghost conveyed to her soul, knew that the time of the public manifestation of Jesus to Israel had arrived. God who had sent Gabriel to announce to the virgin mother the birth of “a Son” did not withhold from her the knowledge that he would now begin to perform wonders and signs in confirmation of his divine mission. She was fully possessed with this idea. Her faith had been nourished by a se-

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\* Judges xiv. 12. Nevins. Bib. Ant. p. 124.

† Rob. Palestine, vol. iii. in loco.



ries of remarkable events; events similar, in some respects, to those which had transpired, in former ages, in the history of her people. She knew that Jesus was the Messiah; though, like the disciples, until after the resurrection from the dead, and the descent of the Holy Ghost—after that Son had visibly ascended into heaven—she did not know that the Messiah was Jehovah. How could she have borne the intolerable gaze? or, the disciples, either, while in daily familiar intercourse.

Jesus having returned to Nazareth, received, through his mother, an invitation, together with his disciples to attend “the marriage.” He accepted the request; and about the middle of the feast, graced the marriage with his presence. His disciples accompanied him on this occasion. The bridegroom, with his friends, were in one part of the house; the bride, with her friends, were in another part of the house. The guests, both male and female, amused themselves in various ways. Samson, we know, as one mode of entertainment, proposed a riddle difficult of solution, and gave the guests the whole seven days to solve it. There was also, music, song, and dancing. It was not until the last day, in the evening, that the bride in bridal array, and adorned with ornaments, was joyfully conducted to the house of the bridegroom’s father.\* All the interval was passed as pleasantly as possible.

Marriage, holy institution: mystic tie—in its deep and holy significance so little understood. Emblem of a great

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\* Nevins. Bib. Ant. p. 124.

mystery—that which subsists between Christ and his church. If it could be understood in this sense, a sanctity not inferior to that of heaven itself would hallow the divine institution, and throw over it a charm which would never pass away. Its vesture would then be spotless;—its life immortal. Love descending from heaven would take up its abode in the heart; revivify it with the life of God, and two souls, as from a mirror, mutually reflect the beauty and purity which dwells within. There would be nothing low, sordid, base in love, but heavenly love, sweetness, and truth, mark every thought, feeling, emotion. Holy tie: mystic emblem. Hasten thou happy day when it shall be divinely felt and understood; and every hearthstone shall be hallowed as by the presence of God and holy angels. Little of the curse will then rest on our earth, and a new song will be sung in every happy, purified home. There will not be found a single discordant string; the design of God, in this holy institution, will be fully answered; and the wisdom and goodness of God will then be seen in the original formation of man and woman, and their holy and happy adaptation to each other.

To return from this digression. It was a timely juncture when Jesus arrived at the feast. The wine had run out; and the family, poor, as we suppose, were not able to provide more. The mother of Jesus, aware of this fact (though it may not have been known to the guests generally—certainly it was not known to the “ruler of the feast”) applied to Jesus. In this she did not act of herself, as we have already said; she was “led of the Spirit” so to act. In the Divine purpose,

all had been prepared beforehand. Jesus stood on the very threshold of his work; the seed had been ripening a long while; the flower was prepared to blow. The heart of Mary was calm, firm; this was produced by the strength of her faith. That faith had been tested in the miraculous conception of Christ the Lord, in a most remarkable manner; it was now to be tested in connection with the performance of the first miracle of our Lord on the earth. Why should any one stumble at this, who remembers the miracles of the Old Testament? It is the same power; the same Almighty hand; no less than the power that made heaven and earth. Is there any thing too hard for God to do? And who is Jesus but God manifested in the flesh; God, dwelling in a human body, among men. Instead of hiding himself from our eyes—making darkness his pavilion, and riding on the wings of the wind; he has made himself visible to our dim vision; he has condescended to our weakness; and walks wearily through our lower world. He sleeps; he hungers—and is athirst. Is his power any the less because the scene of the exhibition of it is changed; or because he is compassed about with human infirmity and weakness. God has given to man power to do the works of the Creator—to raise the dead—to call down fire from heaven—to destroy as with a thunderbolt. Is he not free to act himself? Whatever the form he may assume, or the theatre in which he may appear, Jesus is none other than the great God of heaven and earth; he has drawn the veil aside; and doeth the wonders of heaven among the children of men.

When first told by Mary that there was no wine, Jesus appears to reply with abruptness; the abrupt reply is but in appearance, as the sequence sufficiently shows. Mary is no wise deterred; she regards the reply in its true light, as a test of faith. Knows she not the immeasurable love that is hidden in that breast? Has she watched his infancy and childhood to no purpose? She commands the servants to obey implicitly his directions; and ere long she receives the rich reward of her faith and patience in the immediate supply of an urgent want; and the feast goes on to the end of the week with no want of the necessary supply of pure wine; and, at the close of the week, the nuptial ceremony, blessed by the presence of Christ, and honored by the performance of his first miracle, and the manifestation of his glory, is happily concluded. The evening procession closes the whole ceremony; bride and bridegroom enter the house in company; the lights disappear; the street is still; not even the sound of retreating footsteps is heard; and darkness descends upon the scene. All is silent and lonesome without.



## Book Fifth.

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### CHAPTER I.

DRUSUS, SECOND SON OF GERMANICUS, DECLARED AN  
ENEMY TO THE STATE.—A. D. 30.

AT this point the narrative lingers. We do not proceed rapidly. While events of infinite magnitude were transpiring in Judea, and opening the way, agreeably to the words of Jesus to Nathaniel, to “greater things,” than those we have recorded in several preceding chapters—a deeper gloom brooded over the island of Capræa, and over Rome. Events came on fast. The arch-plotter, Sejanus, thus far successful in all his schemes, is about to experience a reverse of fortune; the mask is to be torn from his face; and his crimes to be exposed in all their hideous deformity. A little interval is yet afforded him; a breathing spell in which to plan the ruin of the innocent, and to rejoice in his villany. Hardly had he succeeded in his machinations against Agrippina and Nero, than he attacked Drusus. Our readers will recollect that Sejanus induced this rash young man to join the conspiracy against his brother from the consideration that the ruin of Nero would subserve his own speedy advancement to the empire. The infatuated youth cajoled by Sejanus, and

blinded by his own inordinate ambition, fell into the snare; and was used as an instrument in the hands of Sejanus to effect the destruction of his brother. This has been mentioned. Now came his turn. The minister, still enjoying the entire confidence of his master, employs the same art of address, and involves Drusus as an accomplice in the same imputed crimes as had caused the destruction of his mother and brother. Sejanus, having effected his end, through Drusus, could, with scarce a pang, or one remorseful feeling, consign the young man to an infamous death. How can pity move a heart that seeks to mount a throne, seize the empire of the earth through a sea of blood; through the commission of the most atrocious crimes?

Drusus, in early life, had been contracted to the daughter of M. Salvius Otho (afterwards emperor) "before she was of marriageable age."\* Disregarding this engagement, Drusus married Æmilia Lepida, daughter of Manius Lepidus, who stood high in favour with Tiberius. Sejanus "gained the affections" of Lepida, as he had previously done of Julia, sister of Germanicus, and wife of Drusus, son of Tiberius, and used her as an instrument to bring charges to Tiberius against Drusus her husband. "She alarmed Tiberius every day with some new allegation; she renewed, with studied artifice, all that had been imputed to Nero and Agrippina, and in their guilt, with affected reluctance, involved Drusus as an accomplice."† Sejanus was the instigator; she

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\* Life of Otho, by Suetonius, sec. 1. 1

† Supplement to Tac. book v. sec. 6.

acted in conformity with his instructions. Ignorant of the relationship which Sejanus already sustained to Julia, she was urged to this course, not only by her own passions, but by her ambition. Sejanus said that, on the death of Tiberius, she should share with her the empire; that they should, in due time, be united in marriage. Tiberius, hearing from Lepida, daily, these accusations, consulted with his minister; he pretended to disbelieve the charges; took the part at first of the young man, and was his strenuous advocate, until "in time the proofs were too strong to be resisted." Then forsooth, he could no longer refuse credence to that which Tiberius alleged; the case was too plain; the young man was indeed guilty with his brother. Drusus, at this time, was on the island of Capreæ; he was in attendance on the court, little dreaming, probably of the baseness of his wife, or the hypocrisy of Sejanus. The minister met him with smiles; and deceived him with fair words; his wife, with well acted duplicity, masked her faithlessness and treachery. Tiberius took what Lepida said for granted; he did not give his grandson an opportunity to defend himself. Unheard, undefended, he received orders to leave the island, and return to Rome. Not long after his return, through the art of Sejanus, his case was brought before the senate; Cassius Longinus, the consul, through the instigation of Sejanus, acted as prosecutor; the allegations were supported by false testimony; and the senate supposing that they were furthering the views of Tiberius, (ignorant that Sejanus was at the bottom of the whole proceeding) passed a vote declaring Drusus

a public enemy. Tiberius was surprised by the action of the senate; nevertheless, in a letter, he "gave orders" that his grandson should be confined a close prisoner "in the vaults of the Palatium,"\* the lower part of the palace; and that he should be guarded with the greatest care. Poor youth! From his dungeon he was never destined to come forth alive. About three years afterwards he died of starvation. It is said that "he was so rabid with hunger, that he attempted to eat the chaff with which his mattress was stuffed."†

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## CHAPTER II.

### CONSPIRACY OF SEJANUS.—PLOT AND COUNTER-PLOT.

HAVING consented to the decree of the senate—having assigned to a dungeon his grandson—Tiberius paused for a moment to reflect. Not having himself denounced Drusus to the senate—knowing how this body was constituted, and that they were willing tools in the hands of power—his thoughts turned to Sejanus, as the agent in the late transaction. The consul, Cassius Longinus, the prosecutor, was a friend of Sejanus; and had acted, he doubted not, at his suggestion. What did it mean? What did Sejanus mean? Suspicion, at first dim and vague, arose in the slow, hesi-

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\* Suet. Life of Tiberius, sec. 54.

† Ibid.



tating mind of Tiberius; he saw the family of Germanicus was nearly extinguished,—the youngest son, Caligula, was the only one that was left. With all his art Sejanus could not entirely conceal his own active agency in the fate of the young men. Drusus, his own son, was dead also. What evil agency was so actively at work, as a mysterious power, to remove the heirs of the empire, and to leave the tempting prize open to the cupidity and ambition of the favorite? Suspicion once awakened, the eyes of the emperor were opened to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. Had he been deceived in Sejanus? Up to this time, (Tiberius had been three years on the island) the emperor, relying on his minister, yielding the care of the government mostly to him, had followed the bent of his wishes to his heart's content. Caring little for the individual misery that he occasioned; unmoved by the death of his mother; uttering no word of hope or love by her bedside, as she lay sick and dying—he sought chiefly his own pleasure. Even his literary gratifications were used as foils and stimulants to give edge to sensual delight, and enhance his enjoyment. He had congratulated himself on the posture of his affairs; his mind free from the cares of government; his retirement unintruded upon; the pleasure of one day giving zest to that which followed. This was now changed; fear, disquiet, seized his mind. Most unexpected was the blow, from a quarter wholly unlooked for it came. This was a serious interruption to those festivities in which his life chiefly centered; harassing fear or anxiety deadens these sensations. The tyrant who de-

lighted to fill others with anxiety has the cup put to his own lip; and is haunted by fear. Suspicion has entered his bosom; and the confidential friend is distrusted; ere long he is regarded as his most deadly enemy. What adds to the weight is that he has no one in whom to confide; and outwardly he must appear to Sejanus the same as before. He must not show his distrust; on the contrary he must hide it deep in his own bosom. There must be no change of manner; no sudden alteration of policy. The government must still be held by the minister; and neither the senate nor the people know, as yet, the alteration that has taken place in his mind toward the favorite. The power of Sejanus was so great that even Tiberius must proceed with caution in effecting his overthrow; the pretorian guards, the senate, officers in every department of state, were his devoted servants; his pliant tools. As for Tiberius he was surrounded by those who were devoted to the interest of the minister; and conveyed to him all he said and did. The guard on the island did but obey his every behest. On this trying emergency Tiberius acted with a degree of caution and hypocritical cunning which surpassed even that of Sejanus. He grasped his hand with the warmth of friendship; privately and publicly he spoke of him as his "best friend;" as "the faithful minister," as "second in rank and dignity." The ground was giving way beneath his feet; but these flowers of speech hid the opening crevice. Sejanus was transported with joy. Tiberius, still more effectually to hide this secret determination, of his own accord, referred to the marriage of Sejanus

with Livia, the widow of Drusus; a union which perhaps the minister, now involved with Lepida, would from policy, have avoided. He could not retract; and the inauspicious marriage was consummated in one of the villas of the emperor, on the island; greatly no doubt to the chagrin and vexation of Lepida, the wife of Drusus. The artful minister contrived to soothe the faithless wife with blandishments, and to avert her dreaded hostility. Never had Sejanus seemingly stood so high in the esteem and confidence of Tiberius as now; his popularity was without bonds. The people and senate regarded the minister as the chosen successor of the emperor, and heir of the Roman empire, and lavished on him—supposing that they were acting according to the wishes of Tiberius—every mark of public favor.

Among other acts of regard, the senate ordered that the birthday of Sejanus should be celebrated every year; his statues set up every where, “in the forum, in the temples, and in private houses;” vows were made, sacrifices offered, and oaths taken in the name both of Tiberius and Sejanus.\* “The fathers passed several votes in his favor, and sent their deputies to the island of Capreæ,” with distinct addresses of congratulation to the minister as well as his master. The body, deceived by the craft of Tiberius, thought that even this form of flattery, which placed the two nearly if not quite on a level, would be pleasing to the emperor; it must have been, in his then state of mind, a bitter draught

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\* Dion Cass. vol. i. p. 240.

to swallow. In the theatre, also, a chair of gold was set for each.\* The senators even began to withdraw their eyes from Tiberius, and to fix them on Sejanus; insomuch that Tiberius feared lest they should indeed raise the latter to the empire.† Apprehensive of the worst, the emperor did not drop the mask, but in his letters to the senate still continued to call him his Sejanus, the companion of his cares.

As a preliminary measure, Tiberius thought it advisable to remove Sejanus from the island, and to this end he “proposed to make him joint consul with himself,” as the man whom he especially delighted to honour.

A. D. 31.

IN the beginning of the year of our Lord, thirty one, Tiberius entered upon his fifth consulship, with Sejanus for his colleague. One object of the removal of Sejanus from Capreæ was to wean the pretorian guards from their former master, and to appoint a new commander. Some fifteen years had passed, since Sejanus received his commission as commander of the guards (his father held the important office before him)—and from that appointment began his career; going to Rome to fulfil his duties as consul, Tiberius appoints Macro in his place, with the understanding that he is to resign on the return of the minister. In every way, until that

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\* Dion Cas. p. 243.

† Ibid. p. 142.



last moment, the emperor seeks to hide his deep design; step by step, he moves with the greatest caution. An adept in dissimulation, he may have found, in the midst of his fears and mortal anxiety, a sort of pleasure in blinding his minister, and hiding from so keen a proficient in this kingly art, his deadly purpose. Sejanus left Capreæ for Rome without apparently discovering any change in Tiberius. His heart beat high with the anticipation of grasping a prize for which he had risked all settled peace of mind, and to obtain which he had committed such heinous crimes. Blinded by the dazzling spectacle, he took the fatal step of leaving the island, exulting in the assured success of his schemes. The arrival of Sejanus in Rome produced a great sensation. "The streets resounded with peals of joy. The senators, the Roman knights, all ranks of men pressed round the new consul with their congratulations. His house was crowded, his gates were besieged, and all were eager to pay their court." \*

The first time for many years Tiberius was deprived of the society of Sejanus. Did he not feel the void? Most likely he did. It is not always easy to part with those whom we have loved and trusted, even though we have discovered their bad faith; the pain of severance is severe even then. The void cannot at once be filled; the heart that has been wounded mourns in spite of itself. There is, also, the wound given to self-love; the mortification that we feel from this source is severe. Besides Tiberius was filled with alarm; suspicion hav-

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\* Supplement to Tac. sec. 18.

ing been aroused, he felt that it was necessary to keep a watchful eye upon the minister. He could not sleep in quiet as before. Dismal forebodings perturbed his mind, to which his absence from Rome, his seclusion, and the timidity and indecision produced by a life of inactivity and self-indulgence, greatly contributed. If he could not trust a bosom friend, a man whom he had loaded with honors, and who, from obscurity, had been raised by him to the highest post of honor—whom could he trust? On whom depend? As he saw the vessel that bore Sejanus leave the island, and watched its course across the narrow channel, how lacerated must have been the bosom of the emperor. Did not the agony that he had caused others—the tears that he he had made Agrippina shed—the pain that he had given Nero—the anguish he had caused his mother—the gloom and fear that he had spread over the imperial city, come up in his remembrance? Did he not now drink of the bitter cup, which, relentless, unfeeling, he had put so often to the lips of others? The poisoned dart stuck in his flesh and drank up his blood; his veins were on fire; sleep departed from his eyes. This is not a fancy picture; he says himself, about this time, in a letter to the senate, depicting his anguish and desolation (his grief, we suppose, extorted the cry of distress, hoping relief from the communication) “what to write to you, Conscript Fathers, or how to write, or what not to write at this time,\* may all the gods and goddesses pour upon my head a more terrible ven-

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\* Suet. Life Tib. sec. 67.

geance than that under which I feel myself daily sinking, if I can tell."

The judgment of God, though it may linger long sooner or later, in some form or other, overtakes the guilty, whether in a high or low position. Tiberius was no exception to this rule; retributive justice follows all; and proves the presence of the Omniscient eye. What horrors tore his heart at this critical period of his life!

Tiberius well knew this was no time for negligence or delay. He wrote to Lucius Piso, prefect of Rome, a confidential letter, to watch all that passed in the city, the proceedings of the senate, and whatever might assume the form of hostility to the government. Enjoining secrecy, he directed him to watch the consul, Sejanus. Piso, Tacitus says, was "a man of principle."\* As governor of Rome, he contrived, amid the horrors of the time, so as act as not to render either his office or himself odious to the citizens; he avoided harsh measures; and "with wonderful address, tempered the rigor of his rule."† To him Tiberius had recourse, and found a faithful servant; he made no disclosure to Sejanus—of all the men in Rome, he was the only one who had good ground to know that Sejanus, in part, at least had lost the confidence of the emperor, and that amid the applause which he received he stood on dangerous ground. To keep up appearances, while thus watchful, Tiberius continued to write letters to the senate in which he spoke of Sejanus in the same terms

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\* Book vi. sec. 10.

† Ibid.



as formerly; expressing the highest esteem and the strongest confidence. He was still "the prop and guardian of the empire; his associate in the administration; his dear, his well beloved Sejanus."

"While" says Dion Cassius, "the fortune of Sejanus was so flourishing, several of the most eminent men in Rome were put to death."\* They were those who seemed "to bend before him with abject humility."† Among the number was C. Geminius Rufus; he did not show sufficient deference to the arrogant minister; the vanity of Sejanus was piqued, and he resolved on revenge. The slightest failure in respect irritated Sejanus; it detracted from his dignity. Geminius Rufus was accused on a charge of violated majesty; and by the senate was condemned to die. He fell on his sword; and his wife Publia Prisca, "being also accused of some crime, came to the senate with a dagger concealed under her gown, which she plunged into her breast before them all."‡

The senate, about this time, with the servility that marked all the proceedings of that body, hoping to propitiate alike the minister and the emperor, passed a vote extending their consulship to the term of five years. This probably was brought about through the influence of the minister who would thus have for so long a period the whole power of the state in his hands. This was a master stroke of policy on the part of Sejanus; he did not dream of opposition. He was secure of his object and rejoiced accordingly; he communica-

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\* Vol. i. p. 244.

† Supplement to book v. sec. 19.

‡ Dion Cass. vol. i. p. 244.



ted his success to Livia, his wife, and they both thought that the empire was attained. As for Tiberius, he was old and infirm, and would soon be out of the way. So the guilty pair rejoiced, thinking the danger over—the last risk run. The decree which had passed the senate was sent to Tiberius. Nothing was farther from his wish; and contrary to his dilatory habits he soon gave the senate to understand this. It was an “infringement upon the constitution,” he said. These were nice words for one, who following the footsteps of Augustus, had absorbed the constitution in himself. In the very commencement of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, “the right of electing magistrates, by public suffrage, in the Field of Mars, was, for the first time, taken from the people at large, and vested in the senate.”\* The people were thus deprived of their rights; as to the senate, they were supple tools; and would vote to please the emperor. The dignity, the selfrespect of the body was gone. Had it suited Tiberius, it would have been all the same whether the term of the consular office was extended to five or ten years; but it did not suit him; hence, in labored phrase, with great appearance of moderation, and respect for law, he smoothly talks of an infringement of that sacred bill of popular rights—the constitution. The constitution indeed! written, or unwritten, it had been torn to shreds; and neither person nor property were safe, if cupidity, fear, or hate, tempted the emperor or his minister to seize the one or the other. A dungeon, the rope, or the

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\* Tac. An. book i. sec. 15.

axe, resolved all questions, and soon decided the question of criminality or innocence; the Romans were safe as long as they respected themselves; their patriotism was pure—it was part of their religion: but when they lost their sense of religion, they, at the same time, in effect, lost their constitution, under whatever specious forms, or well sounding names, Augustus, or Tiberius, or their immediate successors, might administer the government.

A popular constitution, to be preserved unimpaired, according to its true tenor, and the spirit in which it was framed, must find its safeguard and support, in hearts uncorrupted by faction, or the love of power or wealth; hearts free from mercenary motives and aims; and a love of country which is founded on trust in God, and an acknowledgment of an overruling providence in the affairs of individuals or nations. Little religion, at this time, remained to the Romans; hence the rapid decline, on the part of this once noble people, in virtue and true patriotism; hence the virtual overthrow of the constitution. Many a derisive smile crossed the face, amid the cringing servility of the senate, when Tiberius solemnly talked of the constitution; if the senate did bow the knee to a master, they saw behind the mask, and laughed at the farce.

The next step taken by Tiberius, was to resign the consulship for the remaining part of the year; and to request Sejanus to do the same. The minister could not well refuse; so after holding the office some four months, he resigned. In the latter part of April, in the year of our Lord, thirty-one, Cornelius Sylla, and

Sexteidius Catullinus succeeded to the consulship. They were appointed for three months.

This unforeseen movement of Tiberius filled the mind of Sejanus with alarm. He wished to visit Capreæ and requested permission of Tiberius. It was not granted; Tiberius pretended that he was about to visit Rome. The emperor, in his letters to the senate, which were frequent, would sometimes omit the name of Sejanus; and wrote in a manner that showed "that he was weaning himself from his favorite." He also called Caligula, the youngest son of Germanicus, to the island; showed him much favor; and desired the senate to invest him with the dignities of augur and pontiff. This, he knew, would touch Sejanus to the quick; but not quite ready to discover his plans, and hoping to blind the minister, he asked of the senate two more pontificates, one for Sejanus, and the other for his eldest son. Alternating between hope and fear, Sejanus hardly knew what to conclude; but at length was satisfied that there remained but one alternative—the deposition of Tiberius, and his own exaltation to the empire.

Sejanus was a man of great energy; and of no mean ability. Tacitus says of him, that, though fond of pleasure, and an adept in the art of flattery—though profuse, and luxurious, yet was he remarkable, also, for his "application to business, and indefatigable industry." \* These qualities did not forsake him in this emergency; though he was sensible, when it was too late, that he should have acted sooner—when he was consul.

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\* An. book iv. seo. 1.



Then he had in his hands, by virtue of his office, the powers of the state. Still, availing himself of the resources at his command, he entered into a plot or conspiracy against the emperor.\* A formidable conspiracy was soon formed; Sejanus had no time to lose, and all his energies were employed. He used every method to increase the number of his adherents—bribes—the promise of position—the blandishments of flattery. There were many disaffected to Tiberius—these he sought to gain; there were the idle, the dissolute—all who hoped to improve their fortunes by a change; these he plied with his seductive arts. His powers of persuasion were never more conspicuously shown. Many members of the senate joined Sejanus; also, “many of the freedmen; the soldiery was corrupted; and the plot was come to a great height.”† Tiberius meanwhile was ignorant of what was transpiring; Piso, the prefect of the city, knew it not; and Sejanus would have succeeded had he not been betrayed. His chief friend and confidant, Satrius Secundus, (from what cause is not known) sought an interview with Antonia, and made known the conspiracy. She at once deputed Pallas, “the most faithful of her servants, and sent him to Capreæ, to Tiberius.‡ This was the first notification which the emperor received of the extensive and dangerous conspiracy which Se-

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\* Suet. Life of Tib. sec. 65. Suetonius explicitly states this.

† Jos. Ant. d. xviii. c. 6. sec. 6. Josephus was excellently informed on many points in relation to Tiberius; and especially of the particulars of this “dangerous plot,” as he terms it.

‡ Ibid.



janus so quickly formed to seize the sovereign power, and save himself from the fate to which he was exposed. The contest was sharp between these two men—but yesterday bosom friends; now the most deadly foes. Both were proficient in dissimulation; both were bold; but Tiberius, having become conversant with the facts of the conspiracy, the result could not be doubtful. The towering ambition of the minister must end in his ruin; from a height of grandeur and prosperity, such as made him second only to the emperor, Sejanus must be precipitated to the lowest depth of infamy and die a most miserable death. This is then to be the end of all his soaring thoughts; and the fit reward of his crimes.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### DOWNFALL AND DEATH OF SEJANUS.

TEMPTED to evil—blinded by a false light—following evil counsels—steeping ourselves in guilt—sooner or later our sin finds us out; and we plunge often into an abyss from which vainly we seek to extricate ourselves. Happy they who have not proceeded to a point from whence there is no return.

Ignorant of the treachery of his bosom friend and confidential adviser, Satrius Secundus—little dreaming of the secret interview between him and Antonia—of the information which Tiberius had received through the

messenger of Antonia (Pallas) of the disclosure of the conspiracy in its various ramifications, Sejanus, though uneasy, slept more or less secure on the edge of a precipice. He knew that Tiberius was changed toward him—that he no longer possessed his affection and confidence, but he little thought that he was in possession of such accumulated evidence of his guilt. Had he known this he would have struck the first blow; and not have waited until it fell on his own head. Trusting to the secrecy of his manoeuvres, he hastened his movements, though delaying to take the inevitable step, until his plans were fully matured, and his party so strong as to overpower resistance; but Tiberius, fully informed of what was taking place, acting in the dark, and, for once, with dispatch, was beforehand with him. Cool, resolute, and imperturbable as ever, Tiberius, on his island, took the necessary steps to baffle the machinations of Sejanus, and to secure himself.

His first step was to send Macro \* to Rome, empowering him to take the command of the prætorian guards. He gave him the most minute and specific instructions how to act; guarding against danger at every point. We are told by Suetonius, † that in case Sejanus was able to excite an insurrection, Drusus, held as a prisoner in a subterranean apartment of the palace, was to be liberated, and placed at the head of the troops. A son of Germanicus, it was thought that the troops would rally at his call, and flock to his standard. The emer-

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\* Navius Sertorius Macro. Dion Cassius, vol. i. p. 249.

† Life of Tib. sec. 67.

gency was not such as to call for this; and the young man, Tiberius once freed from fear, was left to pine in his dungeon. Leaving the island, Macro arrived in Rome under cover of the night. "The consuls at this time were Memmius Regulus and Fulcinius Trio, both appointed to fill the office from the middle of August to the end of the year."\* Trio was "known to be the tool and creature of Sejanus." Macro, following the instructions of Tiberius, put himself in communication with Regulus, showing him the emperor's orders for Macro to take the command of the prætorian guards. Gracinus Laco, captain of the night guards, was also admitted into the secret; and directed how to act.† All the arrangements were made on that night for the next day, the fifteenth before the calends of November. The issue between the emperor and his once trusted, well beloved minister, was to be tried on this eventful day. It was deemed highly important that Sejanus should be taken off his guard; and that he should have no opportunity to call the soldiers—who were supposed to be devoted to his service—to his aid. The arrangements for the next day appear to have been made in a private conference between Regulus, the consul, Laco, and the confidential agent of the emperor, Sertorius Macro. Little thought Sejanus that night, or any of his confederates, of what was going on; or how near to a close drew his short-lived dream of sovereign power.

Meanwhile Tiberius, on his side, was not idle. "He

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\* Supplement to B. 5. of An. s. 29.

† Dion Cassius, vol. i. p. 248.



ordered the fleet that lay at Misenum to assemble at the isle of Capreæ," intending, if any disaster happened, to seek refuge among his legions, and put himself at their head. Tiberius had shown himself a brave and skilful general; and would not be untrue to his former reputation. His danger recalled his energies and courage; he who had shown himself so brave and expert in Germany, in Pannonia, in Gaul—who for his generalship had commanded the admiration of Augustus—was not deficient now. His low pleasures—the dancing girls from Baiæ,—were, for the moment, forgotten. The chambers of voluptuousness, dug out of the rocks,—the "excavated grottos, galleries, bagnios, and other retirements that suited with the brutal pleasure of the emperor,"\* were for the present forsaken, and left to their native darkness; the "pictures and statues"† with which these hidden chambers of imagery were set round—and which were so offensive to the eye, and shocking to modesty, were left to their own shame—unnoticed—untouched. They kindled no desires in that anxious, troubled breast; his life, the empire, were at stake. To convey the earliest intelligence of the events of the succeeding day, a line of signals had been established along the Campanian coast; they may not have quite reached Rome, but they would expedite the news of a successful result. The night preceding the fifteenth of the calends of November, in the year of our Lord thirty-one, and of the building of the city 784, must have been one of indeed fearful anxiety to Tiberius. From

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\* Addison's Remarks on Italy, p. 249.



its lofty height gleamed the Pharos of Capreæ, casting its red glare on the tranquil sea—upon which Tiberius looked, while his eye closely scanned the whole line of the adjacent shore, as if he would pierce the darkness, and draw from its shadowy veil some omen of the coming morrow.

We may easily suppose that Tiberius arose with the day to watch the first tidings conveyed by the signals along the line of the shore, brought from Rome to Sarentum. At the same time he knew that nothing would be done until the meeting of the senate. He relied mainly upon the activity and discretion of Macro, aided as we have seen by Piso, and Græcius Laco, captain of the city guards. On the highest point of the east end of the island he stood, anxiously waiting and watching the issue of the eventful day. Slow dragged the weary hours along; under the shore of the island lay the fleet at anchor; every preparation having been made for flight if necessary. Meanwhile at Rome things proceeded with rapidity. To lull Sejanus, early in the morning, Macro, through his agents, contrived that a report should be spread through the city that letters had arrived from Capreæ, signifying that the emperor meant on that day to “associate Sejanus with himself in the tribunitian power.” That no letter was sent to Sejanus. Macro accounted for on the ground that the appointment would be communicated to the senate by the consuls. This satisfied Sejanus; he was “elate with joy,” and entered the senate house without fear. The senate met that day in the temple of Apollo, near the imperial palace. The consuls having arrived, Macro who had

followed Sejanus into the senate house, having delivered the letter from Tiberius to them, Memnius Regulus commenced reading it. It was very long; and it was not until toward the close of the letter that Sejanus was directly charged with conspiracy against the emperor. "The conclusion of the letter was like a stroke of thunder. The fathers were covered with astonishment. As for Sejanus he was perfectly stupefied; he moved not, spoke not; a moment before, on the bench on which he sat he was surrounded by his friends and flatterers; the next moment he was deserted; not one was left by his side. The prætors and tribunes, after a little space, having gathered around him, Regulus, the consul, said, "Rise, Sejanus, and follow me." The fallen minister, cast down from such a height of power in a moment, did not at first take the sense of what was said, but after the consul had spoken thrice, he rose in consternation and followed him. The news soon spread, and the populace were wild with joy. He was followed through the street with shouts of derision; his images of ivory were torn down, and his statues dashed to pieces. As much as he had been honored by the senate and people, he was now dishonored. Carried to prison, he was strangled; his body was subject for three days to every species of degradation, and then cast into the Tiber.

He fell—

"Sejanus once so honored, so adored,  
And only second to the world's great lord!"\*

What a fate!

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\* Juvenal, Sat. 10.

——He did but climb a tower  
Of giddy height, a heavier fall to prove,  
Hurled with tremendous ruin from above."

How dark the path of guilt! how insecure! What pangs, what fiery tortures are felt as we walk therein with an unsteady, hesitating step—always fearing the issue. Still we walk on while we can, as if led along by a power of evil which the will is too feeble to resist. As in the case of Sejanus, does the love of power—ambition's dazzling prize—lure us onward? How poor, after all, is the recompense. Any thing gained by crime, by bye-ends, is sure to come back to us with its superincumbent weight on our own head,—and to involve us in unspeakable misery and disgrace. How different is the path of virtue and truth; how sweet are its joys. One was now on the earth who was himself "the way, the life, the truth." How true were his words! But what is more, by believing in his Name what power was communicated to the soul to be and do good. He that had the power to heal the body, had the power to heal all the diseases of the soul, and to invigorate it with a new heavenly life. What a contrast between a Sejanus and Tiberius, and the Teacher of Galilee. How lovely the life of the one; how detestable the lives of the others—O God, give us wisdom to walk in the way of goodness and truth untainted by the gross maxims and corrupt practices of an evil world.

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\* Juvenal, Sat. 10.

## CHAPTER V.

## TIBERIUS AFTER THE DEATH OF SEJANUS.

DION Cassius makes the following remarks on the death of Sejanus :

“IN the case of Sejanus, we may see a remarkable instance of the inconstancy of things below, which shows at the same time that our minds ought never to be exalted with our good fortune; since this man whom every body attended in the morning to the senate, as the first in power, was a moment after dragged to prison as the last of men: he who had crowns consecrated to him, was loaded with chains; and, in a word, he that used to be surrounded with a train of guards for his honor, was now locked up like a felon.” \*

Juvenal, speaking of the humor of the giddy multitude; at the fall of Sejanus, now

‘——dragg’d by hooting thousands through the town,”

says, had he been successful, their execrations would have turned into praise. Thus he speaks of the populace of Rome.

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\* Vol. 1. p. 252.



" They follow fortune as of old, and hate  
 With their who'e souls the victim of the state.  
 Yet would the herd, thus zealous, thus on fire,  
 Had Nurscia met the Tuscan's fond desire,  
 And crush'd th' unwary prince, have all combined,  
 And hail'd Sejanus Master of mankind,  
 For since their votes have been no longer bought,  
 All public care has vanished from their thought ;  
 And they who once, with unresisted sway,  
 Gave armies empire, everything, away,  
 For two poor claims have long resigned the whole,  
 And only ask, . . the Circus and the Dole.\*"

A scene of wild and lawless fury followed the death of Sejanus, occasioned by the prætorian guards, who leaving their camp, and rushing into the city, " bore down all before them, committing depredations in every quarter, and levelling houses to the ground." They were incensed because the city guards had been preferred to them. Macro, fearing lest they might take the part of Sejanus, induced them to withdraw from the city, and their station around the senate house, by the promise of a large donative in the name of the emperor; he also at the same time, gave them to understand that he had been appointed their commander, in the place of Sejanus. Thus invited, they followed Macro to their fortified camp, a little outside of the walls of the city, to receive the donative. Hardly had the prætorian guards withdrawn when the city cohorts,† under the command of their leader Laco, instantly surrounded the senate house; and

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\* Juv. Sat. 10. The number of persons in Rome dependent for their daily bread on the public treasury was immense. Augustus, we think, reduced the number from some 300,000 to 200,000.

† The city guards consisted of three cohorts, making 1,200 men; the prætorian guards amounted to 4,500. Blackwell's Court of Aug. vol. 2, p. 434.

Sejanus was cut off from all expectations of succor or escape. When the guards found how they had been treated, they vented their rage in the manner we have mentioned, doing much injury. The people, they also, in their rage, rose against such as had been instruments of cruelty in the hands of Sejanus; and many of them perished. Thus dark was the day in Rome, and many were the victims which fell, along with the wicked minister, Sejanus. How felt the once honored wife of Drusus, the younger Livia, she whom Sejanus had seduced, and who had imbrued her hands in the blood of her husband, when news came of the end of Sejanus. How must her heart have sunk within her as she saw the populace in the streets, and heard their execrations of the minister. What a day for her! With what a crushing weight must she have felt her guilt; and how greatly have been unnerved by the dread of discovery. Perhaps she may have hid herself and her guilt in some far away chamber of the palace on the Palatine hill,—her bosom disquieted, dreading each sound of footfall approaching her door; and, perhaps, when too late, mourning over the irrevocable past. And now she is awaked up suddenly, as from a horrid dream; the delusion of sin is past, she can be cheated by fancy no more; the dreadful reality can not be superseded by the thought that the past is a dream. No. It was only too real, too true; and the unhappy woman was left to all the torture of guilt, and the fear of detection. Who so unhappy as she! How full of dread! How bitter the cup which was put to her lips! How sure—if slow—the just judgments of an avenging God.

Meanwhile Tiberius Cæsar, on his little isle, on the top of the high cliff that overlooked Surrentum, watched with intense anxiety the signals along the coast, which, with relays of horses every five or six miles (according to the usage on the public roads\*) would bring the news from Rome. Eventful news! big with his fate at least. Near the island, lay moored the fleet, which, by the order of Tiberius, had dropped down from Misenum, its usual naval station, ready for the last emergency. Tiberius greatly overrated the danger; and perhaps was surprised that Sejanus fell so easy a prey to his superior wiles. At all events before the eventful day had passed, he learned the fate of his once trusted minister, and that the danger was over. Still, we are told, that to such a pitch had his mind been excited, and so great were his fears, so mistrustful had he become, that he retired to his villa Jovis,—situated on the high promontory, overlooking Surrentum, and remained hidden within its walls, for the space of nine months.† Such was the end of the conspiracy of Sejanus; and so fell his high hopes; and the end of his ambition, for which he had committed the most dreadful crimes. One would suppose that history, in its drear page, might teach the ambitious how little is eventually gained in reaching the giddy height of earthly glory, by steeping the hands in blood, by the commission of crimes, for the attainment of the desired object. Sooner or, later in many a case, they plunge into the pit which their own hands have digged, and perish miserably. How beautiful on the other hand, is virtue! How sweet

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\* Gibbon's Rome. Vol. i. p. 35.

† Suet. Life Tib. sec. 65.

is the peace which it enjoys! How pure the joy which it imparts! How great is the bliss with which is closed the many changing scenes of human life. God has made virtue its own vindicator; and its smile is a joy forever. Who, if well instructed, would leave the narrow path of peace, and be bitten by the serpent sin. Let light shine from heaven, O God, on the human mind; and let it return, benighted no longer, to its Creator, and reflect the image of the incorruptible God.

The conspiracy and fall of Sejanus seems to have been nearly, if not quite cotemporaneous with the commencement of the ministry of Christ, during his visit to the city of Jerusalem, and a little before the imprisonment of John the Baptist by Herod Antipater, through the wiles and persevering animosity of Herodias.

We turn now from Capreæ and Rome, from Sejanus and Tiberius, to Christ and Jerusalem; Jerusalem, the city of the great King.



## Book Sixth.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### CHRIST IN JERUSALEM.

“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.”

UP to the first public visit of Christ to Jerusalem and the Temple, after his baptism, fasting, and temptation, he had performed but one miracle, that of turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. He had preached the previous winter in Galilee, going from place to place; but performing no miracles. In the spring he came up to the feast of the passover, and displayed his power publicly in the performance of miracles. That this was so is clear from what is said of his reception by the Galileans when, not a very long time after the feast, he returned to Galilee. “Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast for they also went unto the feast.”\*

The preaching of Christ, the previous winter—we learn from the above passage,—notwithstanding the testimony of John the Baptist to that effect, had not led

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\* John iv. 45.

the Galileans to receive Jesus as the Christ; but when they saw, while attending the feast at Jerusalem, "all the things that he did," the "miracles" which he performed, then they regarded him with different eyes, and were dazzled by the halo that surrounded his name. Thus, as day opens, did the mission of Jesus to our world, gradually open to wondering eyes; and make its impression upon awe stricken hearts.

Through the winter, then, directly preceding his first public appearance in Jerusalem, at the feast of the Passover, Jesus had simply preached in various parts of Galilee; the one miracle, which he had performed, had been witnessed by his disciples and the servants; but spring sweetly advancing, he had turned his footsteps toward Jerusalem; and now appeared, for the first time, in that city, heralded by many rumors; and pre-announced to all the land, by a living prophet, whose name was in every mouth, as Jesus the Christ. He came, too, attended by the few disciples, who had believed before they saw his miracle-working power. One of these was Nathaniel, who made the empathic acknowledgment which serves as the motto for this chapter: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Thus accompanied, thus heralded, his name and high office, preannounced by his forerunner, who, in the spirit and power of Elias, had thus prepared his way,—it is natural to suppose that from the time of his first appearance in the thronged streets of the city and in the crowded courts of the temple, Jesus was the object of chief interest to all. For long years, for revolving centuries, the Jewish scriptures had testified of the coming

Christ; this was the chief burden of those writings; this was the chief subject of ancient prophecy, the Testimony of Jesus, and lo! now—Jesus was here; the Messiah had come. Is it any wonder that all eyes were fastened on this personage; and that the multitude hastened to listen to his words. His words charmed all hearts (even though they might not convince) in Galilee; will they be less efficacious in Jerusalem? But to words were now added acts; acts, which plainly declared, that the King of the Jews was in their midst. These carried with them their own evidence; they spoke with weight to the heart and the senses. They clearly showed that the great power of God was among men. Here were works which none but God could do; none but the omnipotent Jehovah. Men were filled with holy wonder; they looked on for awhile in silent amazement; but soon the tide rose so high, that, for a time, prejudice and doubt were overcome, and the great body of the people hailed him with acclamations, and were ready to receive and acknowledge him as their accredited King. There was, however, an under current; the priests and pharisees were vexed at his popularity; and, among themselves, freely vented their spleen; with envious eyes they looked upon the strange scene; saw in the popularity of the new teacher their own authority weakened and impaired. What evil thoughts tumultuously arise from that seething cauldron the human heart! They were ready to gnash on him with their teeth; and, if they had dared, would have brought him before the Sanhedrin, and, at once have condemned him to death for heretical doctrine; for impious blasphemy. But the multitude were completely carried away by the

charm of his manner, the beauty of his discourse, by the miracles which he performed,—and the chief priests and Pharisees did not dare to lay upon him violent hands. Friends—dear friends—gathered around him; friends whose hearts perhaps, by the mission of John the Baptist, had been previously prepared to receive him; and to acknowledge him as the Christ. One family, in particular, received him to their hearts and home; that of Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Mary; and thus, in all probability, at this early stage of his ministry, did Jesus find his way to the town of Bethany. Here was a congenial home; here were congenial hearts; and, we may readily suppose, as evening drew on, and the gates of the city and temple were about to be closed for the night, Jesus, with his disciples, withdrew with these dear friends to their home in the country, discoursing with them as they walked along. Then when early morning came, he returned to the city, skirting the mount of Olivet, and entering by the eastern gateway, directly opposite the splendid facade of the temple. The newly risen sun spread its rays abroad, and lighted up the glittering spectacle of the temple front, sheeted with silver. The silver trump was blown; the people gathered to the morning sacrifice; the incense arose in a thick cloud: the sound of musical instruments were heard. The voices of the singers rang forth—and then the people were ready for the works and words of Jesus.



## CHAPTER II.

## JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israeli, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.” Isa. xliv 6.

NEVER were words grander or greater uttered, than those by Nathaniel, when he said of Jesus, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” These words must serve as a clue to Jesus in the temple; the eye of Jesus saw Nathaniel under a fig tree; and Nathaniel was fully convinced from that fact of the omniscience of Jesus—so that he was led on the spot, and from that one single circumstance, to acknowledge Him to be “the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of Hosts.” Nathaniel knew himself to be in the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. So the scene in the temple must serve the same purpose.

Christ had manifested his omniscience to Nathaniel on the banks of the Jordan; he is about, on a larger scale, in the presence of an immense and wondering multitude, awe-struck at the strange spectacle, to manifest his great power; to show the might of his arm. The priests, the Levites, the porters, and all interested in the present order of things, were here by hundreds; the highest court known in the nation,—the Sanhedrin,—

was one with the priests; its authority sanctioned their proceedings. The eye had become accustomed to the improper use to which the temple had been put; custom, with the sanction of the priests, seemed to have made it right. There were no protests made against the profane use of the temple; no voice of priest or teacher seems to have been loudly raised against it. Buyers and sellers were alike agreed on this point. The multitude looked on in silence; and availed themselves of the advantages, in a secular sense, which were offered. All went on gay and pleasant; and God was not taken into account. The voice of traffic was heard, on every side in the great outer court; and this surely was not in consonance with the sacredness and solemnity of religious service. In entering the courts of the Lord's house, the thoughts should correspond to the occasion, and nothing should be allowed to mar the scene. Is any thing less than this worthy of God? of the Lord, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Whereas all that was transpiring in the outer court generated a worldly spirit, and a pious heart could scarcely fail to be grieved by what was going on. Then—what must the stranger think, as he looked on, and remembered that this house was strictly dedicated to the worship of the one living and true God? would he see much difference between the worship of this temple and that of his own?

How seriously would this weaken the great and sublime and ever-living truth of one God, existing from eternity, self-existent, supreme, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. In one spot on earth one ever-living God stood forth outwardly confessed, yet was

his house so desecrated that little or no difference was observed between it and temples dedicated to the gods of the heathen. Was this the way to let the light shine to the ends of the earth—and to fill the world with the knowledge and glory of the Lord? When would this be accomplished at this rate? When would the heathen turn to the Lord at this rate? If the fountain be defiled at its source—what of the streams? The purification of the temple, therefore, was part of God's great plan to fulfil the word which he spake to his servant Moses;—"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."\*

In the scene in the temple, therefore, we must keep in view the time when God shall arise to fulfil his word, spoken to Moses; and to fill the earth with his glory.

And now behold Christ in the plenitude of his power. Behold him as indeed, according to the confession of Nathaniel, the "King of Israel." He is alone. But the other day he was a stranger in the land; unknown, unacknowledged. To-day his name is a name of power. He sweeps through the magnificent court, surrounded on all sides by its splendid porticos, as a king followed by his train—all arrayed in imposing vesture, with swords drawn, and seated on prancing steeds. The people fall back before him; the priesthood is powerless; pale, trembling, they shrink back in affright. What can they do? They can no more resist the might of this single arm, than they are able to stay the waves of the sea. There is irresistible force in that single uplifted arm.

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\* Numbers xiv. 26.

Should not this be so when we recollect that Jesus is Christ the Lord; the "King of Israel." This is He who spake and it was done; who commanded and it stood fast. This is He who created the sea by his word; and formed the earth out of nothing. Of all that immense concourse of people, from the high priest downward, to the lowest official engaged in the service of the temple, from the captain of the guard to the meanest soldier,—no one had power to move a step; to interpose the slightest obstacle. Those whose interest it was to guard their oxen and sheep, were glad to escape with their cattle; not that they were so much hurt by the scourge which Jesus the Christ used on this occasion—as that the scourge was a fitting symbol of his power, as is a sceptre in the hands of a powerful monarch. It mostly betokened the authority of Him with whom they had to do. How soon were the courts deserted of those who were engaged in a traffic, perfectly right in itself, but which was most unsanctimoniously carried on in the courts of the Lord's house. Did not the people say, "Surely the Lord of the temple is here." As the heavy gust, as the sweeping cloud, as the loud, distant thunder, betoken the approaching tempest,—so the power of Jesus showed itself on this dread occasion,—foreshowing a greater display of wrath to come. We lose, in part, the meaning of the significant spectacle, if we do not connect with it that yet more awful day when God shall arise to judge the earth,—preparatory to its purgation—its future renovation—when all will be made new; and the will of God shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. Glorious day! Blessed prospect! The



theme that inspired the pen of all the holy prophets since the world began.

The people were entirely carried away by this display of the power of Jesus; and for the time, his enemies were silenced, confounded. All were ready to acknowledge (but not with the deep inward conviction of a Nathaniel) that Jesus was truly the "King of Israel." Their convictions were superficial; it was but a temporary gust which moved them; they did not know, as Nathaniel did, that Jesus was really and truly God. They regarded Christ as God's agent or prophet; they did not know that Jesus was God himself; the very and eternal God. They would have made him king at once, but king or potentate after an earthly sort; overlooking or not understanding that the foundation of his kingdom was to be laid in his sufferings, death, and resurrection. The veil was on their eyes. How the people crowded around. How they clamored for him to be their king. The star of John the Baptist, his forerunner, paled before the rising star of Jesus. A new sun had appeared in the heavens; and all eyes were fixed. The whole city was moved to its very depths. The testimony of John the Baptist strengthened the general impression; for all knew, from his testimony, that John had, in the presence of assembled Israel, on the banks of the Jordan, declared Jesus to be the Christ. They remembered, also, THE SIGN from heaven, which John the Baptist had received, to assure him that there was no mistake this time in the person of the Messiah: for the heavens were opened—and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the shape of a dove; and a voice was heard saying,

"This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." All this the people remembered; and the mighty, superhuman power which Jesus had just displayed, corroborated, in the strongest manner, the unequivocal testimony of his forerunner.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth." Zech. xiv. 9.

WHAT greater word could John the Baptist speak, or even Christ himself, than when Christ and his forerunner, his herald, both with one voice said, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:" or, as it is expressed by Christ, in the course of his conversation with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a member of the council of the Sanhedrin, "the Kingdom of God." Kingdom of heaven is synonymous with the kingdom of God; the two phrases express one and the same thing. They embody in one general declaration the sum of inspired testimony in regard to the future of our earth. They remove the vail of night, they lift up as a curtain. is lifted up, the darkness of time. They unfold in bright perspective, a series of ages when no tears will dim the eye; when fear will not blanch the cheek;

when dejection and guilt will no more weaken and afflict the heart. The words are full of gracious augury; a golden thread is unrolled which will run through many an age, and the remembrance of pain, sickness, and death, will have passed away.

When the words were first spoken, breaking upon the dull ear of time, the knell of death was rung out, and the grave appalled began to give up its victims. In his dark prison house the monster death heard the clarion sound, and shrank affrighted from the far-resounding words. Earth felt the touch of a new life; its sod grew softer; its sky more balmy; the sea assumed the quiet of the moorland lake; and shock of storm, and ravage of tempest were heard no more. The eye sparkled with a living light, a light that was to grow dim no more; no more would it sink in darkness, or even close its weary lids. The step, as it walked over the plain of immortality, would be lighter than that of the fawn.

By the phrase, "the Kingdom of God," in its grand and comprehensive sense, is to be understood neither more nor less than what Daniel expressed when he said, "and in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall not be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." \*

Reference is further made to the kingdom by Daniel in the following words: "But the saints of the Most

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\* Dan. ii. 44.

High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." \*

The grandeur, greatness, and universality of this kingdom is yet further expressed in the following words: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole earth, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." †

This kingdom is illustrated by the reference that is made in the eighty-ninth Psalm, to "great David's greater Son." Here rises, as if from the sea, a new power, a potentate differing in many respects from what this sad earth has yet seen. The stream, when traced to its source, begins with the promise made by God to Abraham, that "in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed."‡ We must go back to this promise; we must follow it in its course, as we would a winding, rapid stream, until the river empties itself, at its mouth, into the sea. The whole is built on the word of God; that word on which the foundations of the earth stand. God has chosen for the head of this universal empire, the Son of David; the seed of Abraham cannot be departed from; this is the ordinance of God; and the glory that is to circle the whole earth must come from this source. Not clearer is the path of the sun marked out in the heavens than is this.

"Once have I sworn by myself that I will not lie un-

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\* Dan. vii. 18.

† Dan. vii. 27.

‡ Gen. xxii. 18.



to David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." \*

But from the language that is used, a greater king than king David is meant; the Son of David will far eclipse David himself. Hear the words :

"I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall say unto me,—Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." †

Here is language before which the first glory of Israel pales; and the mind is led to look to a more glorious future,—but still in connection with God's ancient chosen people, the Jews. They are his chosen race; his appointed instrumentality to deluge the world with blessings; while as a people, through the Messiah, the

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\* Psalms lxxxix. 35, 36, 37.

† Ibid. ver. 20-29.

“Son of David,” they will be raised to an eminence beyond that which they had attained in the past.

When Jesus, and his forerunner John the Baptist, said, “The kingdom of God is at hand,” it was the future visible kingdom of the house of Israel that was meant; with its capital Jerusalem, restored to more than its pristine grandeur, seated on its holy hill. The kingdom of Israel to be re-established in the future, in the midst of unparalleled prosperity, exercising a world-wide influence, and built on an enduring basis,—this is what we should understand by the magic words “The kingdom of God.” This is the fixed, definite idea, to be kept always in view; as a light to guard through the dark scene of time; and as a solution to the social condition of man, and perplexed policy of nations. One nation established on a right basis will mould the rest; and the kingdoms of this world, following in the wake of the kingdom of Israel, will submit to the righteous sceptre of Christ

## CHAPTER IV.

## CHRIST IN GALILEE.

THE far greater proportion of the public ministry of Christ was spent in Galilee; among its mountains, lakes, valleys, and plains; among its cities, towns, and villages. It is a little curious we have no record of our Saviour visiting Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, or, even the new city Tiberias, built on the shores of the lake. The character of Herod Antipas, in the Gospel record, looms up darkly before the mind of the reader; and receives no relief from the words of Christ—nothing noble, or manly is said of him; his father Herod the Great, with all his faults, had some shining qualities; but the son had none. Even his partial adherence to John the Baptist, seems to have been dictated chiefly by a servile spirit; by slavish fear, rather than by a real love of the truth, or from profound conviction. He was perhaps more alarmed than convicted by the preaching of John the Baptist. Truth had made no deep lodgment in his heart; selfishness and a little mind, capable of mean prevarication, were the chief characteristics of the man; he compared poorly in these respects with his wife's (Herodias) brother, the first Agrippa, of whom we have already spoken somewhat in this present work.—Jesus, therefore, avoiding the two chief cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias, traversed with unwearied steps, every other part of Galilee. When

the annual feasts came round,—especially that of the Passover,—he would leave his sequestered retreat—the bosom of these green hills, the fertile vales, the smiling fields, and with his chosen disciples wend his way unto Jerusalem. On foot he walked; the burning sun, the summer's heat, and even the winter's cold, (as for instance when he went up to the dedication) did not detain him from these feasts. When they were over he gladly returned to Galilee. The situation of Galilee, surrounded by the Gentiles, gave him the opportunity of preaching the Gospel to the surrounding nations; to the people that flocked not only from Decapolis, Gerasa, and Philadelphia, but also from Tyre, Sidon, and other cities of Phenicia. Beside, Jesus was less molested in Galilee than in Judea; especially from the opposition of the scribes and Pharisees. He was not, during his absence, and long stay in Galilee, brought into so close contact with the highest judicatory of the nation, the Sanhedrin; and consequently less exposed to its arraignment. This tribunal was still in its power; and such as it condemned to death, the Roman governor did not often interpose to stay proceedings. It was but little shorn of its high executive authority in the time of Christ and sometime afterward. Especially offences against the Jewish law were left to its exclusive jurisdiction; the Romans did not interfere in nice points of this nature; and the council may be said to have been left for the most part untrammelled when a violation of the law of Moses was made the ground of indictment.

In Galilee, then, was seen, for the most part,—shining in the darkness—dispelling from the human mind, igno-



rance and error, the great light of the world. Mount Hermon, on the north,—snow capped Lebanon, mount Carmel, overlooking the sea, received the first rays—the earliest beams of this new, resplendent sun; down their hoary sides the light streamed, till it bathed both valley and plain lying at their huge base. Now it danced over waving fields of grain in the rich plains of Esdraelon and Zebulon; now glittered along the surface of streamlet, running river, and placid lake. Over the hills of Galilee Jesus walked, even to the top of Safet; the highest point in Upper Galilee, from whence is seen Capernaum and the plain of Gennesareth, with the lake lying seemingly just below your feet. In the tetrarchy of the good Philip, also, Jesus walked; still within the wide and fertile range of Galilee. The synagogues of Galilee Jesus visited, as he went from city to city preaching the Gospel of the kingdom,—that is, pre-announcing his elevation, in a given time, to the throne of his father David. The trumpet blew a certain blast—what if the generation of that day should not see this, would the promise be made void by delay? Would the passage even of centuries before this word of promise should be literally fulfilled, weaken its force? By no means. The word that was spoken was a sure one; it floated over the waters of the lake, as music; or reverberated, as thunder, from the bosom of the mountains. The people listened and understood it as it was meant; but did not perceive that its exact fulfilment belonged to a future and distant day. But their hearts were revived; and Jesus, throughout Galilee, was received and hailed as the King of the Jews.

## CHAPTER V.

## FAITH.

It is not hard to conceive how at the display of power by Jesus in the temple, as he swept it of all that was unclean and offensive; of all that was contrary to the sacredness of the holy place, that prevented its high intent, and made it emphatically a house of prayer for all nations, irrespective of creed or race; a certain awe—for the time—fell on the people, and upon the whole city. As night threw its mantle over the city, and the gates of the temple were closed, and the night guard of the temple was set, and the wood on the altar renewed, while the flame blazed bright, steady and clear,—and the priests took their rounds in the various courts, keeping guard over their spotless sanctity; the people, retired to their homes—discoursed of the great event of that day; admiring the heroism of Christ; his zeal for the law of Moses; and the powerlessness of his opponents. A superhuman power rested upon him. No chieftain in battle, pursuing his foes, triumphing over gigantic odds, ever gained admiration so sincere, so strong. There was nothing in it of human adulation. The people were carried away by the majesty of his presence, as well as by the power of his single, uplifted arm. They felt that God was here; that a power more than human gave

strength to that unaided man. None were slain; there were no mangled limbs—no bruised and bleeding bodies—but still all felt—perhaps for the time even the priests of the people, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had risen up in his strength. Alone, in the arena, he stood; there was no one to oppose; his triumph was complete. Need we wonder that a certain holy awe fell upon the city; that solemn silence prevailed; that the stars looked down from their high abode, as if mute witnesses of the majestic scene.

Each heart throbbed with deepest emotion and gave back but one spontaneous response, “Lo, God,—the great God,—he who built the earth and skies,—who made man,—is in our very midst?” Deep awe—deep silence rested on the city full. People spake in low tones; they rather whispered to each other, than spoke aloud. Even in their houses they breathed forth rather than uttered, what they said. Some were joyful; some were sad. Those who were burdened with crimes,—who had oppressed the hireling in the gate,—who had robbed the poor of their just wages,—or the widow of her scanty pittance,—the murderer, the adulterer, the masked hypocrite—these and all liars—all guilty of any concealed villany or crime, trembled at the sound of that footstep treading the courts of the Lord’s house, as if with the shock of an earthquake, causing even the solid foundations of the temple to tremble. Such were sorely affrighted: but the righteous were glad. They sang for joy; they hailed, with loud acclaim, the coming of the Prince of Peace. How their hearts beat for joy! How joyful was the sound of their voices, even if they did

speaking in a low tone, bowed into silence by such a PRESENCE.

Far and near spread the word; while the multitude of representatives from Galilee, who had as usual attended the late annual great festival at Jerusalem, carried back the amazing account through all that region. Jesus, not returning to Galilee immediately after the feast, and when he did set out to return,—moving slowly,—the news preceded him; and all both of Upper and Lower Galilee was alive with it, at the time of his arrival. So when he returned to these parts it was as a conqueror; and now too he was fully prepared to manifest the glory which he had with the Father from before the foundation of the world. The sun had risen in full splendor; his light was no longer veiled; clouds, mist, thick and heavy vapor, and dark night, were gone, and Galilee, should now witness without stint, innumerable Godlike acts, similar to those that the holy city had witnessed. All hearts were warmed as by the reviving breath of spring.

Almost at his entrance upon the threshold of Galilee (having perhaps first visited Nazareth) he had an opportunity of displaying his almighty power. He who does not see this, does not see God in anything; for it is a vain attempt to strive to separate the Godlike acts of Jesus from his eternal Godhead. A King is here; one who acts in his own right; who gives no account of himself or of his doings to another. Yea, the very God is here; he who is above all is here; the sole, unoriginated, everlasting Lord; yea, even the Ancient of Days, though unattended by shining ranks of angels. The marshalled hosts are in the sky, but they are not



seen; still they attend on his march, and perch on his banner. He is not alone; though he seems to be alone and unattended. Never had earthly monarch so royal an attendance; and as for the number of these invisible ministering spirits, they are countless—even as the stars in the sky, and the sands on the seashore.

Once more Jesus was in Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. He tarried here awhile before he proceeded to Capernaum; and now was performed his second miracle in this place. A ruler of the Jews, a member of the inferior council of twenty-three, (of which there was one in every city, beside that for the whole nation, which consisted of seventy-two persons, whose sittings were held at Jerusalem\*) came from Capernaum to Cana, to intercede on behalf of his son, who was lying at the point of death. If by the sickness of his son he had been prevented from attending the festival at Jerusalem, the fame of the wonderful works of Jesus had reached his ears. He himself may have heard the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus; had probably been baptized by John in the Jordan, confessing his sins. What John had testified had been corroborated by what he had either heard or seen of Jesus at Jerusalem. By whatever means the conviction had been produced, this man, a ruler of the Jews, like Nicodemus, though belonging to an inferior Sanhedrin, was fully satisfied that Jesus was the Messiah. This was the all-important point; he did not doubt for a moment but that this was so. His faith was strong

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\* Prid. Con. vol. ii. p. 224, note.

perfect unwavering. He had the fullest confidence that Jesus could save his son: and he did not doubt his willingness to do so. He was a person of the most transparent character, and of the most extreme sincerity. He was a man of deep humility; and had a loving heart. As Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin, so he loved his son. He did not wait till he came to Capernaum; but with a heart wildly throbbing, hearing that Jesus had returned to Galilee, and tarried at Cana, he came to that place. How strong indeed was his faith! It was steadfast. It was perfect. It was faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, (grounded on testimony) and consequently as the Son of God. When it was tested by the interrogatory of Jesus, (or what amounted to this) "Will you believe in the absence of some wonderful sign, performed before your eyes?" he did not hesitate, but said he wanted no such sign. His faith was grounded deeply in his own heart; he wished no additional evidence to satisfy him that Jesus was the Messiah. This was enough; and his son was healed in that selfsame hour.\* The healing virtue of the omnipotent word was instantaneously felt, as he learned by comparing accounts with his servants the next day. Here was no room for contrivance or catch-play. The parties were widely separated; they were, until then, in all probability, unknown to each other; and the father had come on his mission alone.

Now, in a case like this, there is no great mystery in the faith in Jesus, nor in its result. The case was plain.

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\* John iv. ver. 53.

It was a full conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Anointed One of God, and as such was in our world to do wonderful works.

The ground, also, on which this faith rested was plain. It was the testimony of John the Baptist, his forerunner, corroborated, substantiated, in the most unequivocal manner, by the works of Christ himself; works confessedly beyond human power.

This is the key to every miracle of Christ in the New Testament; and when, to a very considerable extent you have given the *rationale* in one case, you have given it in every case. There is really no mystery in what otherwise appears so deep, so wonderful; it is simply believing the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. This is the sum of the whole matter. To attempt to explain the miracles of Christ on any human hypothesis, is to turn the whole into a farce.

You see precisely the same faith in the centurion, the Roman captain. As a class these men were very cruel; according to the discipline of the army they "were authorized to chastise with blows." \* They made free use of this right; and were often the objects of the most deadly hostility on the part of the soldiers. The centurion referred to was of a different stamp; he had been taught in a higher school. First of all he was a believer in the Jewish religion; he had become a convert to the great truth of one God, and had renounced polytheism, or the worship of the numerous gods of the Greeks and Romans. He had gone further than this. He had been

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\* Gibbon's Rome, vol. i. p. 7.



a diligent student of the Jewish Scriptures; and had found that their chief design was to testify of Jesus.

This gave them, to his mind, their chief charm; this invested them with an attraction and interest beyond that of anything else. He saw here a great King announced; a conqueror—but in a new guise. He was to conquer sin, death, and the grave; he would open up a new era in the history of man. He was to proceed from the Jews; to be a descendant of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David. He should ascend the throne of David, and establish a universal empire. One of his titles was that of the Prince of Peace; and it was his great work to introduce a reign of peace in the earth. The centurion saw hope for our world through this source, but through none other. The reason of this was because God said so; said it in his holy word. This written, ancient, inspired, well-authenticated word, he fully believed, and he rested the glorious future of our earth, and of his own steadfast hope on the written word. The storm of centuries had beat on this word; it had been assailed in every imaginable form—but it still stood—like a rock, rearing its worn and gray head high above the fury of the rampant waves. He clasped the well-worn book to his heart; he read it in his tent; he carried it with him into battle. It was to him a source of sublime hope, and as a trump calling the dead from their graves, and bidding them live again.

But now he saw something more. He saw in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, the person foretold and described in the ancient Jewish Scriptures. He had heard also, probably, the testimony of John the Baptist,



and may have witnessed the scene where John pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God to the deputation of priests and scribes from Jerusalem. The centurion, at the late feast, may have been one of those who witnessed the grand scene in the temple, when all felt a power which they could not withstand or resist. He had also heard the fame of his mighty works, and if he was at the feast he had beheld them with his own eyes. At all events, his faith that Jesus was the Messiah was perfect, and he doubted not that he could do whatsoever he pleased.

It was in this spirit that he approached him in behalf of his sick servant. Need we be surprised at the result which followed? Why should Jesus come to his house? His word was omnipotent; he had all power in heaven and in earth; he had but to speak the word and the work was done; the faithful servant whom he loved would be cured. He knew this; he was perfectly persuaded of it in his own heart. This gives such naturalness to the whole transaction. It has all the air of a picture painted from reality; it is a scene of real life. There is no straining after effect; and as for the narrative itself, it is told in as few words as possible. The key to the whole scene is the great faith of the centurion in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. Like Nathaniel, he recognised in Jesus "the Son of God, the King of Israel." What then could he not accomplish? What was there that he could not do? The reason why our faith is so weak is that we often unconsciously to ourselves, separate the Son from the Father, and without meaning to do so, make them two distinct persons;

whereas they are one and the same. He is "the everlasting Father," "the mighty God;" "of his years there shall be no end."\*

This is the secret of faith in Christ; and which makes it omnipotent. This arms even man with the power of God, and enables him with a Moses or a Joshua, to do wonders in our earth. The manifestation of God in the flesh was known to prophets as well as to apostles. They periled their all on this sublime truth. This Abraham understood; so also the elders, those illustrious men of old, who "through faith obtained a good report."

There is no necessity in this work why we should repeat the miracles of Christ. They all belong to the same corollary; they are designed that we should deduce from them this conclusion, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing we "shall have life through his name."

The miracles in themselves, are comparatively of small importance. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead." They are designed chiefly to teach faith in Christ; and having answered this important end, they pass away with the things that are not. To those that are led to believe in the name of Jesus as in the name of God, they answer a higher and nobler purpose. They bring down from heaven the life of God into the soul—a miracle which is repeated from age to age. This is a miracle presented to the perceiving soul; and which is attested by a life moulded after

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\* Ps. cii. 27.

that of Christ; a life in harmony with that of Christ; a life in harmony with that of which he has left the living example. This is the end of faith—the regeneration of the soul. Is faith in Christ, then, a dream, a vague idea, floating in the mind—when its result is the transformation of the character from what is bestial, vile, corrupt, to what is holy, simple, sweet, pure, innocent. The practical result of faith in Christ is worked out by one such living example, to an absolute demonstration. Suppose Tiberius Cæsar to have felt its life-giving power, in the island of Capreæ, and he would have presented to the world such another spectacle as that of Titus, son of Vespasian, who, during his brief reign, by his complete transformation of character, received and deserved the appellation of the “darling of mankind.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### JESUS IN CAPERNAUM.

A FERTILE strip of land, two miles in width, reaching back to the hills, and four miles in breadth, bordering the shore of the lake, forms the celebrated plain of Gennesareth,\* (so eulogised by Josephus) at the northern extremity of which stood Capernaum.† Near to it,

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\* Dr. Olin's *Travels in the East*, vol. ii. p. 404.

† Ibid.

on the same rich plain, were probably the sites of Chorazin and Bethsaida.\* Villages touched each other on the shore of this lake, as they did at the era of this history on the bay of Naples. The whole shore, now so silent and desolate was then alive with cities, villages, towns; and with a superabundant population.

Capernaum, as the chief residence of Jesus after leaving Nazareth, must always be dear to the heart. We do not intend to go into a detailed record of all that occurred in and about this memorable place. The light of prophecy had shined on this spot as the home of the Lord of life and glory,—long before his incarnation. From this spot chiefly would his light shine forth; here he would perform his mightiest works. Surrounded on all sides by heathen nations, they would hear of his works; and could readily flock to his ministry. In this respect the locality was peculiarly adapted to the wants of the Gentiles; and this, in the wisdom of God, prepared the way for the introduction of Christianity at an early date among the nations generally. This was part of the beneficent design of high heaven to the children of men.

It was meant also to impart hope to the Jews in a dark hour of their history, when the Assyrian should have carried them away captive (as we have already said) to the land of the Medes. The season of the desolation would be succeeded by the light of hope; Galilee swept of its native population, would be inhabited by them again on their return from the land of the captivity: and

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\* Dr. Olin's Travels in the East.



yet more, the Messiah would irradiate it with his presence. Here he would live;—Upper Galilee, Galilee of the nations, would be his home. Wherever he might be called to labor,—on his return,—this would be his home. Favored city!—Chosen residence of the Son of man! On the shore of this limpid lake he often walked; on its waters he sailed; by the side of its fountain, near where the road turns to ascend the mountain, he often, as we may conjecture, sat down. From its fig trees he ate the luscious fruit, hanging on the branches, ripe ten months out of the twelve. On its smiling fields he gazed with a pleased eye.

We may also imagine him of a soft moonlight night gazing on the tranquil scene, (He, the Lord of all) and looking forward to the time, when, after a long and dreary captivity of many centuries, Israel should regain its own once more, and anew cultivate this ancient plain; launch its boats on the lake once more; and more than restore the former fertility of the land. That his eyes were intently fixed on this future day there can be no doubt.

It is pleasing to think of Jesus in the house of Peter; sitting at the same table with him, his wife, and wife's mother. He sleeps in this house: he lies down to sleep and rises up to pray—or proceeding a considerable distance from the house ere he reached the solitary place—preventing the day with his cries and earnest supplications. What formed the chief subject of his prayer? It is easy to guess. It was the regeneration of the earth; the removal of the curse; the dethronement of Satan; the destruction of death. Was

not this the work which he came to do? The Son of David, is it not his work to restore the throne of his father David, and to rule over the house of Judah? Can we suppose for a moment that he was forgetful of his great work—the very business he came upon earth to do? Surely not. This would be the most transparent inconsistency. In his prayers, then, in the solitude, while even his disciples slept, we may imagine him thus engaged, as was also Jacob, when he wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant, the whole night in the open air. The burthen of prayer was one and the same,—the regeneration of our earth; removing, as sang the Mantuan poet, (drawing his inspiration probably from the Hebrew oracles,) “the last vestiges of evil” from our world.

Memorable day, when on the smooth shore of the lake of Galilee, he called to be “fishers of men,” the four partners, Peter, John, James and Andrew, calling them from their nets, and their humble avocation, to lay the foundation of a kingdom on this earth which should not be moved. They were first disciples of John the Baptist; next they became the disciples of Christ, as such accompanying him to Jerusalem, and being partly initiated into their future work. But now they are fully called; absolutely chosen and set apart as his apostles. This was the high commission of these men after they had stood out their allotted term of probation.

They were all fishermen; depending for support upon this humble calling. Their nets and boats were their all. Now their boats were hauled up on the shore; now they were launched into the sea. They were not

large; a single draught would fill them even to sinking. It was while they were engaged in their calling they heard the voice of Jesus, and, leaving all, followed him. What was their chief preparation for so great a work? It was simply this: they believed that Jesus was the Christ; the Jewish Messiah. They needed no other. This faith invested them with a power which nothing else could; and purblind is that man who seeking for the causes of the establishment of Christianity in our world, overlooks this. The history of their association with Christ, shows that his great object was to teach them who he really was. This was the sum of their teaching; this was the basis on which would be erected the most splendid superstructure the world ever saw. "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" was the interrogatory frequently propounded to the disciples; this was a test question. It was intended to test their own faith; to ascertain the progress which they had made in their knowledge of Christ. It was not science, or history, or philosophy, or even the theology of the Jewish schools which they were taught—but the knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah. Once taught this as a divine reality, and like the knights of old, arrayed in armor from head to foot, they were prepared to contend against a world in arms. This was an armory containing inexhaustible resources. Their success would turn on this single point. Without this all other advantages would be unavailing; with this, their deficiency of rhetoric, or want of polish of manner, or obscurity of birth or condition, would be but little felt. The chief point was to know and to be assured that Jesus was



the Messiah. So far as books were concerned, this knowledge could be found only in the Jewish Scriptures. No other book contained it; this made that book superior to, and unlike all others. The works of Greek and of Roman authors had nothing in them of this; there was hardly an allusion to this great theme. But it was the sum of the Jewish Scriptures. In this mine the disciples delved, instructed by their Master; the deeper they went, the purer became the gold; and they drew from this source daily this truth, with constant augmentations, Jesus is the Messiah—they threw their whole soul into this deep truth. Especially was this true of Simon Peter, whose wonderful faith, as we have seen, gave him his surname.

The testimony of the sacred writings from beginning to end, the testimony of John the Baptist, and yet farther, when given, the testimony of the Holy Ghost,—with the works of Jesus, and his own unqualified affirmation, all combined to imprint on the minds and hearts of the disciples of Jesus the truth that Jesus was the Christ, and as such the Saviour and regenerator of the world. This was the ark of the testimony to the chosen apostles of Christ; in this name they went out conquering and to conquer. As the ark of old was carried about the walls of Jericho,—itself, from the word which it contained, the source and center of strength,—and caused the walls of the city to fall down,—so the name of “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” was the tower of strength to his chosen apostles. This was that mysterious power, which, first felt in Judea, took the circuit of the Roman world, and in spite of philosophy



and superstition, planted the banner of Christ every where; and overturned in its triumphant march the altars alike of Greece, of Italy, and, in part, of Asia and Africa. Rome, Cyrene, Athens, Antioch, all felt and acknowledged the name of Jesus. The power that accomplished this was in this name; the name of the holy child, Jesus; and this was the preparation of the apostles for their great work, the full and undoubting assurance that JESUS WAS THE CHRIST.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM.

WE regret to leave Capernaum. We linger around its shores, its waters. On those waves walked, time and again, the Son of Man. In a boat, a little distance from the land, he preached to multitudes lining the silent shore, and listening attentively to the words that fell from his lips. They were the words of One who had come from that mysterious world, into which we strive vainly to look. The vail had parted; he had drawn it aside; he had appeared. Here he is in our midst; one who has come from that invisible world. He speaks to us; we hear his voice; we see his face—a face radiant with goodness. He moves among us on this earth, like

one of ourselves ; he is tender and compassionate—to none more so than to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

To the erring how tender. Oh, how he loved ! How sweet his speech ! He would reclaim the wandering by love ; he would win a lost world back to his arms ; he would fold all to his bosom. That eye of tender solicitude ! It awakened hope—it did not fill with despair.

Oh, God ! hast thou indeed descended from heaven into our midst to teach us how to love one another ; to be kind and compassionate ; true and sincere ; to watch over one another for good. There is no shibboleth in his speech ; he doth not wrangle about words, or introduce questions of strife. His creed is not narrow ; it is universal love. It is as wide as humanity ; it follows a sigh in its wide sweep over the earth ; it sheds tear for tear with the unfortunate. This is the Saviour we adore. Bonds and stripes and imprisonments are not his weapons to reclaim men from error ; but love, pure love, to and for the erring.

A single day we will describe, and then leave the pleasing theme.

The Sabbath had dawned : Jesus was in Capernaum ; it was in the commencement of his ministry. He was in the house, probably, of Simon Peter ; the preceding night he had slept under his roof. The waters of the lake gently laved the shore near the house of the fisherman of Galilee. Early in the morning how soft the scene ; a morning unbroken by sounds of labor ; all is still. The sun has not yet risen ; or his beams do but gild the tops of the highest mountains. The boats are

all moored along the shore ; scarce a ripple moves the glassy wave. There is a very gentle breath of air astir ; the perfume of flowers—the early flowers of the season,—scents the fresh morning air. The song of birds is heard ; the blithe carol that ushers in the new-born day. The wind is fresher as it comes over the water. All is peace and quietude.

How clear and fair the morning is. A solitary stranger stands on the silent shore ; he looks abroad on the scene. All is so serene and beautiful, it would seem as if sorrow might not be there. The stranger that stands on the shore of the lake is here to banish sorrow ; to bind up the wounded heart ; to rebuke disease and pain ; to bring back to our earth, in due time, the bliss of Eden. Is he reminded of the day, when, the work of creation done, angels sang their pæans through the sky, ere sin had struck deep its cruel fangs into the earth ? His eye stretches forward to the time when the soil, purified by fire, shall be restored to its virgin purity ; when not a tear shall moisten the eye. We must suppose that such thoughts arise in his mind ; and that he rejoices, amid so peaceful a scene, in the certain accomplishment of the work he came into our world to do. These reviving hopes mingle with his griefs, and relieve the pain which he suffers from the contemplation of the dark cloud which covers the earth ; and the innumerable ills of life. He is about to mitigate ill ; to diminish its measure ; but not yet wholly to remove it from our earth. That time is not yet come ; though light is already beginning to break forth. Dark shadows must still chase each other across the plain of time.



At the usual hour, in company with John and Andrew, and James and Simon Peter, Jesus entered the synagogue. We may easily suppose that all eyes were fastened upon him; that his entrance sent a sensation all through the congregation. What took place in the synagogue greatly heightened the interest, and filled all minds with wonder. There was a man in the congregation possessed with an unclean spirit. This was an actual possession. An unclean spirit from the kingdom of darkness had entered this man. It may have taken place that very morning, in the course of the services. The mode of entrance, the manner of demoniacal possession, is beyond investigation. We know but little indeed of our own spirit; what part of the body it inhabits; how it superinduces action. In the case before us, we must be governed by the language which is used; we have no right to fritter it away or make it read to suit our own notions. Language is made to express explicit ideas; this is its office in the Bible, as elsewhere. To torture words, to put them on the rack, and by the stretch of our ingenuity to compel them to express just the meaning we want, is surely not the way to arrive at God's truth. In this way you can make words mean just what you please; and you can wrest the Scriptures to your own mystification and that of others. If you remove evil spirits out the Bible, you may good spirits also. This system of interpretation, this way of construing language, would involve the negation of Satan. What then would become of the kingdom of darkness, and its overthrow by Christ, which is one of the principal ends of his mission into



mission into our world. No. We must take the record as it reads. Should we not do so we derogate from Christ—whose power exerted in the dispossession of the unclean spirit, filled the minds of those who saw it with the most perfect astonishment. It was not the man himself who spoke, but the unclean spirit that had entered into the man. He knew Christ to be the Jewish Messiah; a knowledge which from the temptation in the wilderness we know Satan possessed. What he knew on this point, his followers knew; for all were combined against Christ. Invisible agencies and powers pervade the whole of the sacred record; not fanciful, like those of Homer, but real; being armed with an invincible hostility to God and to his righteous government.

The unclean spirit addresses Jesus with a malignancy which betrays his origin. His acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ is a forced acknowledgment. He does not sue for mercy, though he deprecates his wrath. He knows Jesus to be all powerful, and to be capable of inflicting upon him just punishment. His language is that of an intelligent being; there are no marks of aberration of intellect. The scene makes the greatest impression; and when the evil spirit comes out of the man he does so with the utmost violence. He vents his spirit to the last. The animus that contrived the fall of our first parents is here apparent; the demoniacal possession accords with what occurred then. Take then the account as it reads; and with the congregation assembled in the synagogue on that memorable Sabbath adore the mighty power of God. Amid the forms

of evil in the time of Christ, it is clear that demoniacal possession was regarded by the Jews as the worst. That, as one form of evil, it should at that time have been permitted by God, is no more wonderful than that at different periods in the history of our world different forms of disease, strange, new, unknown, baffling for long all human skill, have ravaged the earth, and then have passed away, to give place in course of time to some new form of devastating disease, enigmatical as the Egyptian Sphinx. If we undertake to resolve into airy nothing the existence of demons—evil spirits—and their possession of men in the time of Christ—we may as well resolve away certain species of disease, which, in every age, have baffled the skill of man; for the one as well as the other is unresolvable by human reason.

The services of the synagogue were over; the house was closed; the sacred books returned reverentially to the coffer or ark, and laid aside. The house was left to its silence; a silence deepened by the departure of the throng with which it was filled. It was crowded probably to overflowing, the expected presence of Jesus having drawn together a larger congregation than usual. In silence we may suppose, musing upon what they had seen and heard, the people returned to their homes; a more than ordinary solemnity rested on every mind, even upon those who were usually the most flippant, whom not even the sacredness of the Sabbath, or the deep theme of immortality, could teach sobriety and reverence. Children even were touched for the time with the demonstration of the visible presence of God,

the God of their fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

There were men of wealth who formed part of the group; those who lived in fine houses, and in the midst of opulence. Jesus entered into the house of the fisherman, Simon Peter; Andrew, the brother of Peter, and James and John,\* their fellow partners, accompanied him. The door opens; the house receives them; they disappear from sight. Who has entered this house with these men? Who? None other than He who was before all time; whose existence, far back in the depths of eternity, cannot be traced by weak, finite mind. How impossible for us to measure back to that infinite duration which always was. God of heaven and earth! Is this so? Has that door closed upon him who always was—who existed from eternity, and will forever exist? Has he assumed so humble a form? Does he consort with poor men—men of ignoble birth? Does he demean himself to our lowly estate—not sitting among the great—not courting worldly influence—not seeking notoriety—but entering this poor man's house, sitting down at his table, and partaking of his simple fare. Yes. God himself is on the earth,—and he is at this moment in the house of Simon Peter. Before the time of the evening meal he demonstrates his divinity, his eternal Godhead and power, by healing the mother of Peter's wife, and she arises from her sick-bed perfectly restored to health, and able at once to attend to the affairs of her son-in-law's house. Her face is illumined

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\*Compare the three accounts in Luke, Mark, and Matthew.



with the glow of health ; and her presence with the rest of the family diffuses joy throughout the household. With what alacrity she ministers to Christ ; how she watches his face ; how thankful she feels. The one cloud that rested on the house and wrapped it in gloom has passed away.

And now the softly descending sun (summer's ardent heat has not yet commenced) announces the approaching close of day. Down in the valley, and on the western shore of the lake he withdraws his beams before the time of his setting arrives. Gently steals still evening on ; but when the day is fully gone, and the sun has set—to be quickly succeeded by night—an unusual activity prevails. Until now all had been silent, but many had looked forward with intense anxiety to this evening hour. Now was heard on the lake the sound of oars ; now latches were raised, and doors were opened ; and while daylight still lingered on the tops of the mountains, and some faint traces were seen on the face of the waters, a large multitude had assembled at the door of Simon Peter's house. It would seem as if the arrival of Jesus in Capernaum and the fame of what had taken place that morning in the Synagogue, must have spread far and wide. Without the slightest distrust, from every part of the city, and possibly from the closely adjacent villages of Bethsaida and Chorazin, the sick were brought to Jesus. This fact in itself shows that he was regarded with undoubting faith as the Messiah by these persons at this time. They fully expected when Messiah came their sick to be healed. This was according to the word of ancient prophecy. Messiah was to heal the



sick. Thus it had been written : " Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."\* This display of almighty power was looked for with the most perfect confidence, and consequently the houses were emptied of the sick. No matter what might be the form of the disease, or how long soever it may have resisted the healing art, or, apparently, how incurable, not a doubt seems to have been entertained but that a Great Physician was at hand who could administer a remedy. Nor was their confidence misplaced ; their foregone conclusion was fully verified. Of all that were brought every one was healed. It was not an isolated case here and there, but *all* the sick that were brought to Jesus, without a single exception, were cured. And not only the sick, but those who were possessed with devils were delivered from their tormentors. The devils were obedient to his word. That these were really devils who had entered into men, is evident from the knowledge they had of Christ. They addressed him as the " Christ the Son of God."† So it had been in the morning at the synagogue. The devil had said, (though the possessed uttered the words aloud with his lips.) " Let us alone ; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."‡ This is not the language of a madman, but of one possessing superior intelligence. The knowledge of the mission of Jesus to our world—of its aim or design to overthrow the kingdom of darkness, the empire of sin and Satan, was

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\* Isa. liii. 4.

† Luke iv. 41.

‡ Ibid ver. 34.

known to the devil and his agents. This must be admitted. It is a theme interwoven throughout the sacred narrative. The book is aimless unless this be conceded. Consequently all hell is alarmed at the advent of Christ; and he is resisted at every step by the devil and his angels. Possibly by addressing him as they did they may have hoped to discredit both himself and his mission; or, if this was not their motive, their acknowledgment of Jesus may have been a sort of involuntary acknowledgment of him as the Messiah, the promised Saviour and Deliverer of our world from the thralldom of the Prince of Darkness. Thus, from the mouths of devils (evil being overruled for good) would farther testimony be furnished that Jesus was in very deed "the Christ, the Son of God." Here there is an argument to show that demoniacal possession was an evil by itself, just as sickness or insanity are evil by themselves; and, governed by the narrative, we must take it to mean just what it says. There are evil angels; there are powers of darkness. In the time of Christ, and in part, as we suppose, for the greater display of his power, they were permitted actually to take possession of men; to afflict them in various ways, till they were forcibly driven out by the word of Christ.

What a change passed over Capernaum! What an evidence was then furnished,—had it been consistent with the providential dealings of God to man,—of his power to remove evil from our world. It could have been done then, while he was in the world, but the full time had not yet arrived. Still, what happened should be regarded as a happy prelude to what will be by-and-

by. This world, which has been the scene of so much sin and sorrow—where sickness has wasted, and the sword destroyed—where evil has so long triumphed, and good been stricken to the dust,—is reserved as a theatre on which God will display his superabundant goodness to man : where a fabric will arise, a stately temple, on whose wide portals will be written in golden letters, these words : “ Glory to God in the highest ; ON EARTH peace ; and good will among men.”

## Book Seventh.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### HEROD ANTIPAS IMPRISONS JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE CASTLE OF MACHÆRUS.

THE castle of Machærus, in which John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod Antipas, was situated on a high cliff, or mountain top, overlooking the Dead Sea, and not far from the deep and long ravine by which the hot springs of Callirrhoe descend into the adjacent sea. This ravine was to the west of the castle, and was of such a depth, according to Josephus, that the eye could not reach to the bottom. On all sides the castle was "ditched about with deep valleys, not easily to be passed over, or to be filled up with earth." It was considered nearly, if not quite impregnable.

The castle Machærus stood on the east side of the Dead Sea, not very far from where the Jordan pours itself into its arid waters. It stood but a short distance from the north end of the strange, mysterious lake. It must have commanded a view of this whole body of waters, from its northern to its southern extremity, with the high and sterile mountains on both sides. Easily could be seen, toward the south, though



often veiled by the thin mist which like a transparent curtain overhangs the sea, the high and sandy peninsula which bulges from the eastern shore into the lake, narrowing the lake at this point, and partially cutting off the view toward the south. Still the eye might pass through the opening of the seas on the west side, down to the south end, where was the plain of Sodom and Gomorrah ; and where at this day is to be seen Usdum, or the mountain of salt, and near it, also, a lofty pillar of pure salt.\* Dark and desolate is this end of the mysterious sea ; low the shore ; shallow the water for a good distance from the shore. Here the sun pours down his most fervid beams, and little water is found to quench consuming thirst. Hardly can you breathe the close and stifling air, and almost impossible is it to resist the overpowering tendency to sleep.

On both sides of the sea, along the Arabian and Judæan shores, pure, sweet water is to be found. On the east side the river Arnon pours its crystal stream into the salt sea, through a wide and high chasm ; along it pours, varying in depth at different points, until it reaches and enters the sea. This is but one ravine, on the east or Arabian side, out of many ; through these ravines you ascend, by a toilsome route, but through more or less luxuriance, to the high table-land of Moab, overlooking the sea. On the west side, also, are ravines, and streams, and fountains of water. Close by the sea, on the west side, is one fountain. Five hundred feet

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\* Lynch's Expedition to the Dead Sea. This is one of the most useful of books.

up the mountain, at Engaddi, is another fountain, called "the diamond of the desert." Here you can quench your thirst in the purest, sweetest water. Thus in the midst of desolation and barrenness is relief found. These naked mountains, these high, steep cliffs, this briny sea, the bleak, desolate shores which encompass the sea, with here and there a little spot of green, or patch of canebrake, have some marks of humanity about them; as if man in no case is to be left without hope. The most desolate spot on earth, the gloomiest, the most forbidding, is not left without at least a tinge of sunshine to relieve the otherwise insupportable dreariness. Is not this intended to teach man a lesson? Who *can* conceive of such a thing, in any condition, as the human soul unsupported by hope? Here, in a spot where cities overthrown for their wickedness, suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire," and are mementoes of the just wrath and righteous indignation of God, there is to be found an oasis—a fountain—a tree—which speak of mercy mingled with judgment.

From the top of the castle in which John the Baptist was confined, could be seen this salt sea, with its heavy waves lashed into tempest by the rising wind; high would the leaden waves rise, threatening to submerge the venturesome bark launched upon its heaving bosom. The wind quickly falling, the waves would at once subside, and become calm as before, the surface of the sea shining like molten lead. From the top of the castle, also, could be seen the sirocco, as it swept over the dull monotonous waters. Little of the sweet breath of wind is felt here, all is still and surcharged with

death. Life in no form inhabits this sea; though the day is at hand when a fountain of water in Jerusalem is to be opened; a real fountain at the threshold of the temple, which, flowing out of the city, is to reach this sea, to revivify it with life, and to remove from it the curse of barrenness. Fish will swim in its restored waters; fish of every kind (where none ever swam before) will swim in this sea. As yet it has subserved no purpose of commerce, but it will then. As an inland lake it will perhaps be navigated, many a vessel sailing over its bosom;\* yet will not its peculiar character be wholly changed. On the north end of the lake, where is more or less marsh, and at the south end, near which is Usdum, these miry places "will not be healed; they shall be given to salt."† Why are the good so cast down at the condition of our earth? Even here, where desolation reigns in its most unmitigated form, we have a promise of good. If we may venture to think of John the Baptist as looking from his prison upon this dreary sea, we may imagine his heart cheered with the promise of future good to our earth; a promise which leaves no part of the earth untouched by its healing power. Even the Dead Sea, dark and sluggish so long, will wake to life, and shine in beauty. The voices of many fishermen will be heard on its now silent shores; and their nets will be spread from Engaddi (where is the cave of Adullam) to En-eglaim, from the western to the eastern side of the lake. Suppose you that the blood of the prophets was shed in vain? No. Their deaths

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\* Ezek. xlvii. 10.

† Ibid. ver. 11.



form part of that chain of providence by which God effects his own gracious plan; a plan of mercy, wisdom and justice, too deep for us as yet fully to explore.

We cannot by multiplying words say much more than that John the Baptist was at length cast into prison by Herod Antipas, at the instigation of that bloodthirsty woman, Herodias; that the prison in which he was confined was the castle of Machærus, and that here in due time, he ended his life. His imprisonment, as we know, was not strict, and his disciples had easy access to their master.

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## CHAPTER II.

JOHN IN PRISON SENDS TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES TO JESUS.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” John i. 6.

NEVER did man appear on earth with so great a mission as John the Baptist. He stands alone in his grandeur, like a pyramid in the desert. At his birth the communication between heaven and earth, so long closed, was opened to be shut again no more. If ever a man could be said to be truly the herald of the skies, it was the forerunner of Jesus. His presence in our world marked the commencement of a new epoch. The clouds about the mountain-top rolled away, the mist at its base was dispersed. God's own hand drew aside



the dark, impervious vail that hides the visible from the invisible, and as if he careered on air, riding above the clouds and storm and tempest, he announced the coming day; yea, even the dayspring from on high, the day of eternity itself. What! has not the earth been shrouded in darkness long enough? Have not men groped their way in the dark long enough? Is it not high time that the curtain that enwraps the earth, and hides so much that is bright behind its folds, should be drawn aside, or lifted up; so that we may see beyond the dim and narrow horizon of time? To introduce this messenger from the skies upon the stage, and present him in his unexampled greatness to the world, the veil of heaven parts asunder—a glimpse at least of the heavenly glory is afforded, its celestial throne is displayed to our admiring view; while an angel of God swiftly flies from heaven with a message of the very highest import, and the grand drama of “the restitution of all things,” of the “creation of a new heavens and a new earth,” is ushered in with a degree of splendor and solemnity suited to the greatest event the world had yet seen.

When in Greece, at the Olympic games, or at any other particular solemnity or festival, the theatre was opened and a play performed, full of religious feeling or sentiment, and displaying in scenic form some tragic picture of human life, some dark unravelled web of fate,—every adventitious aid was given from surrounding natural scenery, and the position even of the theatre itself, to add to the deep impression of the scene,—and to fix upon the minds of the spectators the existence of the overruling power of the gods. And now

when God incarnated is to appear in our world, to solve all mysteries, and explain each dark event in human history—to pierce the cloud of night—is not the event with all the circumstances attending it to be marked with the utmost significancy, and to be surrounded with such gorgeous drapery and bright unfoldings as God alone can impart and furnish. The appearance of John the Baptist in our world was as if he had stepped forth on the stage of time from the skies; he lived as an angel rather than as a man on the earth, having been sanctified from the womb, and then in a chariot of fire more glorious even than that of his namesake, ascended into heaven, leaving a track of glory behind, which like sunlight on the hills, has not yet faded away. The sun set, but its rays remained; they are seen all glittering and golden to this auspicious day.

Oh, God, what a mission! To herald the advent of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ into our world, and to bid men to look forward through all mysteries and darkness to that most glorious event, the great theme of prophecy, the “Restitution of ALL things.”

But his short race is nearly run. He is in prison, and his blood must be added to that of the martyrs of the Old Testament. The prison has no gloom for him; his soul is full of light. The “sure mercies of David,” that is, the resurrection of the dead, built on the resurrection of Christ from the dead, had been fully unfolded to his divinely illumined mind. Should this doctrine be made known to David, and not to the revealer of Jesus to men? Surely not. When he pointed

to Jesus as "The Lamb of God," he himself understood well the secret of his death and resurrection. "Lamb of God," as applied to Christ, was not a sealed formula to this man of God. He understood its deep import; the virtue that lies concealed in the phrase was conveyed to his enraptured soul; and with David he rejoiced in the great fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He was as one who stands on a high mountain top, and sees the day dawn while all is yet buried in darkness in the valley below; ere scarce as yet a ray of light has darted down the mountain side.

When John stood on the flowery banks of the Jordan,\* and had pointed out Jesus as the Christ to the Jews,—not finding his words generally heeded—his testimony of Jesus indeed at first wholly rejected,—he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to be taught particularly of him. What the result was we know. They came away from their interview with him with the full conviction that Jesus was the Christ; and remained ever after his steady adherents. This was the result of a single interview; and their conviction was founded on the witness, or testimony of John, with the declaration of Scripture testimony pointed out by Jesus,—unsupported as yet by any of those mighty works which were afterward performed. Jesus is now in the full fame of his ministry; the word or testimony of John is supported by the wonderful works of Jesus. Desirous that

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\* See Lynch's Expedition to the Jordan and the Dead Sea; in which we follow the adventurers down the entire length of the ever winding stream, over many a whirling rapld.



the disciples who remained with him should have further demonstration that Jesus was the Christ, he sent two of them forth on a mission of inquiry to the very fountain-head, to Jesus himself. Perhaps in this hour of trial his disciples needed special encouragement; they saw their loved master imprisoned; and doubts may have been suggested by Satan whether John had not made a mistake. Not that they yielded to these doubts; by no means; they contended victoriously against them as unworthy of their master, who, they surely believed, "was a man sent from God." John, even in his prison, exulting in the success of Christ, was led to send two of his remaining disciples to see with their own eyes, and report to the rest. This they did; and in due time returned and reported to the faithful few that clave to John in his imprisonment, the great works of Christ. This was of service to them; they rejoiced at what they heard; the testimony of John concerning Jesus received additional confirmation, and John's spirit was cheered by the joy and hopefulness of his disciples. As for John, he needed not any additional testimony to this great fact; this fact had been his very life; in the desert it had been as manna to his soul; the words of his father, that he was the appointed prophet of the Highest, ever rung in his ears; they were confirmed at length by the sign from Heaven which the great God designated as the seal of his mission. What more could he have? To know Jesus as the Christ was his all of knowledge; not to know Jesus as the Christ, in the fullest sense, constituted him an incompetent witness, and to suppose that he could lose this knowledge



during a brief and not severe imprisonment, (for he had many relaxations) is to suppose him to have been unworthy of the name and high office of a prophet of the living God; himself the foremost and highest on the illustrious list. Is death then so terrible that so just a man should fear to die? None but a coward could thus fear; not such a man as John the Baptist, who rather than keep back any portion of the truth exposed himself to the greatest peril; and at length paid the penalty of his fidelity to truth with his life.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

WE need not dwell on the death of John the Baptist. It is an event familiar to every reader. In the castle of Machærus he was slain, and thus ended his life and testimony. We will close what we have to say of this man of God, with his last testimony of Jesus, just before he was cast into prison, as recorded by John the Evangelist. It is as follows:

“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of

the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”\*

This is the wonderful testimony of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, just before he was cast into prison; and he cheerfully sealed his testimony with his death. The grave wore to him a smiling face. Why should it not? It was the gate through which he passed into the presence of God, and put off whatsoever was cumbersome in the flesh.

As to his last, recorded testimony of Jesus, what words did he use.

“He that cometh from above is above all.” And again:

“He that cometh from heaven is above all.”

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\* John iii. 27---36.

## Book Eighth.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### TIBERIUS LEAVES HIS VILLA.

A. D. 32.

WE anticipate the order of time a little. Certain events occurred at the end of the year 31 which have not been mentioned. While Tiberius remained in the seclusion of his villa, the friends, relations and adherents of Sejanus were sacrificed without mercy. To have been the friend of Sejanus, in the eye of the senate, furnished sufficient ground of death, as if nearly all the senate had not been guilty of the crime. Who, indeed, judged by this rule, was more guilty than the emperor? All the eminent men of Rome, with but few exceptions, following the example of Tiberius, had ranged themselves among the fast friends and adherents of the minister. They hung upon his favor as upon that of the emperor. In the executions that followed it would be curious to learn how the senate distinguished between the guilty and the innocent: had justice been done, how many of that body would have escaped? In the dark and cloudy day few were found who avowed their friendship for the fallen minister; yet Tacitus records one

noble-minded man, who did not disavow his regard, but defended his friendship and love. In the course of his speech in the senate he made the following remark: "Which of the two evils is the worst, to suffer, on the one hand, for a faithful attachment, or, on the other, to blacken the character of the man whom we have loved, I shall not decide."\*

The uncle of Sejanus, Junius Blæsus, a man of consummate military talents, united with great political abilities," perished; also the eldest son of Sejanus, and his daughter, "as yet a tender infant, and insensible of her sad condition."† Neither rank, nor sex, nor age was safe. The records of the time are not sufficient to enable us to speak save in somewhat general terms of the havoc that was made among men of the first distinction, senators as well as Roman knights; the whole forming a most gloomy picture, and enveloping Rome in sadness.

To increase the horror of that dismal period, Apicata, the repudiated wife of Sejanus, overwhelmed by the untimely end of her eldest son, (who was in no way implicated in the conspiracy of his father) revealed to Tiberius the plot of her husband and Livia against his son Drusus; and now for the first time, after the lapse of eight years, the emperor learned that his son came to his death by the hands of Livia his wife, and Sejanus. He had thought that Drusus died through intemperance; what Apicata said roused him from his lethargy in his villa, and awaking from his state of inactivity

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\* Tac. An. book 5. sec. 6.

† Ibid. sec. 9.



“he passed several days in a close inquiry into all the circumstances of that transaction.” Eudemus, the physician, and Lygdus, the eunuch, confessed their guilt, and were executed. Of the end of Livia, widow of Drusus, we have no certain information, but we may reasonably suppose that she perished by order of Tiberius. Such was the end of this guilty woman, and most richly did she merit her doom. Rarely, if ever does guilt escape its due punishment in some form or other, even in this life—an accusing conscience—harrowing remorse—are not these tormentors? While a heart at rest is the reward of one who fears God and works righteousness.

The lion had come forth from his den. Tiberius now was seen going from villa to villa. Another spring and opening summer had come round; the almond, the vine, and the fig bloomed again on the island, especially in that little fertile spot between the eastern and western mountain. Now he might be seen ascending this easy staircase, now that, to reach the different eminences.\* Now at noon, he shelters himself under the shade of some tree, or of some overhanging cliff, and inhales the southwest wind of summer. He has numerous subterranean apartments; he wanders through them; he seeks relief but finds none.

What nine months of agony were those that followed the death of Sejanus!

What this tyrant suffered during those nine months, what pen can depict? He was haunted by a thousand

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\* Addison's description of Capræ.

furies ; he rolled on his bed in anguish. Sleep departed from his eyelids ; he had no rest day nor night. It was as if the tormentors had seized him. "His crimes," says Tacitus, "retaliated upon him with the keenest retribution : so true is the saying of the great philosopher,\* that if the minds of tyrants were laid open to our view, we should see them gashed and mangled with the whips and stings of horror and remorse."† Because such men repose in seeming security, and their crimes escape punishment, we imagine that they are at rest, and envy their condition. They are little to be envied. Thus was it with Tiberius. We suppose that during the greater part of the time of his seclusion, his faculties were nearly paralysed. Perhaps he thought that they would never again recover their vigor. In his despondency he fell back upon himself, and, for awhile nerveless, full of fear, in part alarmed by imaginary terrors, he was ready to sink down in a state of utter despair. While danger threatened he was compelled to act ; but that averted was followed by a feeling of almost utter hopelessness, until the revelation concerning the murder of Drusus recalled his energies, and once more roused him to action.

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\* Socrates.

† Tac. An. b. 6. sec. 6.

## CHAPTER II.

## TIBERIUS SAILS ALONG THE CAMPANIAN SHORE.

A. D. 32.

ONCE more Tiberius, in a vessel, with certain select companions, among whom was Caius Caligula, his successor, (the youngest son of Germanicus,) embarks; sailing slowly along the Campanian coast, and making as if he would visit Rome, enter its gates, be seen in its streets, and tread the apartments of the palace on the Palatine hill. Six years had elapsed since he left the city; six miserable years in his life. He was now seventy-two or three years of age, but his mind was active and vigorous. Dissipation had no doubt enfeebled his naturally robust frame, yet his will was strong as iron, he strove against the infirmities of age, and would hardly admit to himself that his constitution was enfeebled by his daily excesses. His imagination revelled in scenes of licentiousness; age did not impair the force of his desires. The elevation of a pure and noble mind was not there, nor freedom from debasing thought. There could not have been much freedom of discourse, for the rhetoricians, the grammarians, whose society he preferred, were afraid lest he might misconstrue some unguarded word, and visit them with his wrath. He did this more than once; and those who were admitted into the closest and most familiar intercourse were never

safe; neither could they ever have been wholly free from fear. How severe is that tyranny which rules the mind as well as the body! Tiberius in the early part of his reign was less exacting, and by no means so ready to take offence. But toward the close of life he was suspicious and jealous to the last degree; and imagined offences, or slights, or inuendoes where none were meant. How unhappy was this man! As, however, they sailed along, various was the discourse: turning on literary and philosophical topics. Tiberius had an acute and argumentative mind. Astrology was one of his favorite subjects, and he loved to look into the future. The art of divination, to some extent, he possessed, and gave instances of strange skill, from whatever source his knowledge of future events was derived.

Along the whole Campanian coast the vessel sailed. From Surrentum to Misenum; from Misenum to Sinuessa, now known as Mondragone.\* The same headlands struck the eye then as now. There was Mount Pausilypo; there Cape Misenum with its harbor, stretching out into the sea, and the waves dashing against the rocky promontory. There was also Mount Circeo, as now. Then there were numerous towns along the coast; among the rest Antium: (within two miles of what is now called Nettuno) there was also Terracina, where the Appian way strikes the sea. As he sailed by this place, could Tiberius fail to recall the scene

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\* "It is along the shores of these two gulfs, that is, from Sinuessa to Misenum, and from Misenum to Surrentum, (Bay of Naples) that the whole of Campania is situated." Strabo, book 5. c. 4. sec. 3.



when his life was saved by Sejanus? The various islands that dotted the sea then, dot it now. There were Ischia and Procida; but most striking of all, there was the little island of Pandataria (now called Ventotene) on which still languished in prison and in exile the unfortunate Agrippina, the widow of Germanicus. Did no touch of pity move the obdurate tyrant's heart, at the sight? None. Immoveable was his stern face as he looked upon it, appearing but as a speck in the distance. No soft relentings were felt, no yearnings of heart toward one so disconsolate. Thought he not, also, of his dissolute wife, Julia, daughter of Augustus, who, by his order, in the first year of his reign, perished of starvation on this island? The people of Rome felt more pity for this unhappy wife and mother, this daughter of the emperor, than did either her father or Tiberius, her third and last husband. How alive was this shore with cities and temples which have since crumbled into dust! How many splendid edifices of the great men of Rome then adorned the coast, which with their owners have long since passed away.

Then, also, Christ lived; and the same hand that has recorded the name and acts of Tiberius,—that has mentioned even this sailing voyage,—has mentioned the name of Christ. As Tiberius Cæsar was taking this voyage, Jesus the Christ was preaching in Judea, and doing many mighty works. Shall we receive the unvarnished record of the one, his acts of tyranny, his nameless vices,—and not the account of the good deeds and holy life of the other? Why receive the account of the one, and reject that of the other? They both

belong to that age; and trod the stage of life at the same time. The vices of Tiberius are inseparably conjoined with Capreæ; the endless deeds of beneficence of Jesus—of his wonder-working power—are written on every streamlet, hill top, valley, and city of Judea. How is it that the name of Jesus is thus so indissolubly joined with the land of Judea (as that of Tiberius with Capreæ) if he had not so identified it with that land, as that it could not possibly be disjoined from it.

We know not how long the sailing voyage of Tiberius lasted. Tacitus tells us \* he landed at “many places” along the coast; he sailed up the Tiber; he visited his gardens on the banks of the river; he approached within sight of the city, and then disappointing the people, returned once more to his island. This no doubt gave his malicious bosom pleasure—much more so than the adulation of the people, had he gratified their wishes.

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\* Tac. An. Book vi. sec. 1

## CHAPTER III.

SOME INSTANCES OF THE CRUELTY OF TIBERIUS DURING  
HIS RESIDENCE ON THE ISLAND OF CAPREÆ.

THE marks of infamy and cruelty which have been left upon the name and memory of Tiberius Nero Cæsar, were made in the closing years of his age. He grew harder as he grew older; more obdurate; as if he would revenge upon others the mental tortures which he endured.

He knew himself to be little loved; but that on the contrary he had become the object of general loathing, fear and hatred. How differently he was regarded from Augustus. While all hailed with acclaim Augustus, and nothing was so much feared as his death, all looked forward with longing desire and intense expectation for the moment when Tiberius would be removed from their midst, and his successor, Caius Caligula, the youngest son of Germanicus, should take his place. The people little thought what a successor he would have in Caligula, and how much more abominable his vices would be than those of Tiberius, at all events more open-faced, if not more flagrant. Surely the avenging furies had seized upon Rome, and it was about to reap the fruit of its evil doings. The hour of judgment upon the ill-fated city had at last arrived. God avenges upon cities the misdeeds of their rulers and people; no great calamity has ever yet fallen upon the capital of a great nation,

but that its doom has been written upon its forehead in the crimes of its rulers, and the general dissoluteness of its inhabitants. Many a lesson is lost upon the world by overlooking present retribution, and not seeing in the signal overthrow of nations, and especially of great cities, the seal that God affixes upon crime. Let us not altogether look beyond the annals of time for the display of the just judgment of God upon the ungodly, but remember that this earth has been the scene (why should it not have been?) of dreadful catastrophes which have swallowed up the mightiest cities, and have left their record for the instruction of men. Had the Roman empire heeded the lesson which it had received in the three great empires by which it had been preceded, how much better for its after fate it would have been. But nations, like men, learn nothing from the experience of those that have gone before, but tread blindly the same beaten path, and experience in the end one and the same fate. We are too much given to ignore the earth as, in part, at least, the scene of retribution, and as the stage on which God enacts his most fearful tragedies.

But we have been drawn unexpectedly from our narrative by this digression.

It is perhaps a peculiar feature in the character of Tiberius, that he should have hidden as under a cloak his worst traits for the last few years of a long life. This is thought to have been mostly the result of circumstances: the seed was there, though it ripened so late. We are told that when he was a boy, his teacher in rhetoric, Theodorus of Gadara, depicted his naturally



cruel and sullen temper by describing it as "mud mixed with blood."\* On the island of Rhodes, it is said, he did not hesitate to make way with those who were obnoxious to him, and that once Thrasyllus, his favorite astrologer, just escaped death by some happy exertion of his art, Tiberius having resolved to cast him into the sea.† We are even told that he showed some letters of his brother Drusus to Augustus, in which his brother had said that Augustus should be forced to restore the public liberty.‡

Certain it is, that the people thought had Drusus lived he would have made an effort to restore the republic; and long and tenderly on this account, as well as for his amiable disposition and many noble traits, they cherished his memory;—at his death transferring their love for him to his son Germanicus, the heir of every princely virtue. We know enough of Tiberius to conceive of his doing so mean a thing as this, and betraying his brother because of his popularity. Tiberius surely had not a great and magnanimous nature; we do not recollect a single instance in his life as a warrant for this. He was assuredly intensely selfish. He was also of a gloomy, morose, and unsociable disposition, sullen and reserved. Dion Cassius says he was one of those whose words and looks express the very opposite of what they feel; and that his character must be closely inspected and thoroughly studied to know when he was pleased and when displeased.‡ Still, to the honor of

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\* Suet. Life Tib. Sec. 57.

† Ibid. sec. 14.

‡ Life of Tiberius by Dion Cassius.

Tiberius it must be said, that he detested the servility of those who were most servile ; thereby showing that he had some trace of greatness, one mark of a nature not originally ignoble. A truly great mind admires whatever is noble and virtuous, and cannot stoop to that which is low and mean.

But whatever may have been the early character of Tiberius, however he may have disguised his real character for a long series of years, or kept down a cruel disposition, he became in the end a most cruel tyrant ; remorseless, inaccessible to pity. His treatment of his daughter-in-law, Agrippina, of his grandsons, Nero and Drusus, furnish sufficient proof of this. They all perished miserably under his hands ; Agrippina almost under his sight. During the imprisonment of Agrippina she was treated with the greatest severity ; one of her eyes was put out by the blow of a centurion, encouraged to such treatment by Tiberius. After her death her memory was loaded with the blackest crimes. What sort of a person is he who traduces the dead ; who charges unjustly an innocent woman, in her grave, with scandalous crimes ? Unhappy Drusus ! Think of his slow, lingering death in the vaults of the Palatium, while his grandfather wallowed in filthy orgies in subterranean apartments that he had built in Capræ. Nero, also, died of starvation, as is thought. There was but Caius left ; and Tiberius is said to have meditated his death ; and might have accomplished it, had he lived a little longer. We do not speak of Sejanus : he richly deserved death, and all engaged in his dark conspiracy ; but think of the condemnation of the inno-

cent along with the guilty. Especially may we drop a tear of pity over the little daughter of Sejanus, on her way to death, appealing, in softest accents to know what she had done wrong.\* Think of his conduct to his aged mother; this unnatural son, as if he were free from filial obligation, or any sentiment of love to the author of his being, pretending business while immersed in sensuality, as an excuse for not attending her funeral. Had not the last spark of humanity expired in his bosom?

If he were thus cruel to his own, we need not wonder at his cruelty to others. On the eastern end of the island, there is a spot still shown between Pharos,

“Where the lantern fix’d on high  
Shines like a moon through the benighted sky,  
While by its beam the wary sailor steers,” †

and Villa Jovis, called “The Leap,” where those condemned to die, after long and exquisite tortures before the eyes of the emperor, were thrown into the sea. Far down the transparently clear waters their bodies could be seen descending, while in case of life remaining in a sufferer there was a party of boatmen lying in the offing, prepared with poles and oars to break their bones. Tiberius did not mean that one should escape. He delighted in suffering, and sought to prolong the tortures of his victims as much as possible. Ingenious tormentor! He invented new methods of torture, such was the dire malignity of his nature. If he could give one additional pang to a victim, he was happy. He was

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\* Tac. An. b. 5. s. 9.

† Addison’s description of Capreae



essentially a tyrant, not from any motive of royal policy—but because he actually delighted in cruelty. Hence the dark cloud that enshrouds his name, and blackens his fame in the eyes of posterity.

In the case of Asinius Gallus, son of the celebrated Asinius Pollio, the friend of Virgil and Horace, of Cæsar Augustus, also, we have an instance of that refinement of cruelty in which Tiberius so much delighted, and which shows truly the nature of the man. Asinius had married Vipsania Agrippina, daughter of Marcus Agrippa, after Augustus had compelled Tiberius, his step-son, to divorce Vipsania, his first wife, whom he passionately loved, and marry Julia. This was one cause of dislike on the part of Tiberius towards Asinius Gallus. Then again, at the time Tiberius before the senate acted as if he were uncertain whether to accept or to decline the empire, Asinius made an unhappy speech, which brought down upon him the wrath of Tiberius. It was an imprudent speech on the part of the senator, which he had no sooner uttered than he regretted that he made it. While the senate urged Tiberius to accept the empire yet the more strenuously because he seemed to decline it, the emperor at last, as if yielding to their solicitations, “intimated that though unequal to the whole, he was willing to undertake any part that might be committed to his care:”<sup>\*</sup> Upon this Asinius Gallus said, “Inform us, Cæsar, what part do you choose?” Little did Tiberius expect such a question as this; he extricated himself from the dilemma as well as he could. In

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<sup>\*</sup> Tac. An. Book I, sec. 12.



vain did Asinius Gallus attempt an apology; the emperor regarded what he had said as a grave affront, and laid it up in his heart against him. At length the hour of revenge came, though years had passed away since the offence was given. Asinius was a friend to Sejanus; that minister was still in power at the time to which we refer, though his power was on the wane. The senate, ignorant of the change which had taken place in the feelings of the emperor toward the minister, had decreed new honors to him, and had deputed Asinius Gallus to wait upon the emperor at Capreæ, and inform him of the same. Tiberius received the deputy with a smile; he was entertained in the most hospitable manner, was "a constant guest at his table, and a sharer in all his pleasures." But, while outwardly thus welcoming and receiving him with every honor, the emperor secretly despatched a letter to the senate, containing charges against his guest, and requiring that Asinius, as a criminal, should at once be taken into custody. An officer was sent to apprehend him, and he was seized while enjoying the hospitality of the emperor. To secure his estate to his children, Asinius would have put an end to his life, but was persuaded by the emperor not to do so, as he might safely rely on his protection.

Asinius was taken to Rome, placed in close confinement, deprived of the sight of his friends, and just allowed food enough to keep him alive and prolong his misery. To lengthen out his torture gratified the malice of Tiberius; and this was the sole reason why the emperor hypocritically promised to use his influence with the senate in behalf of Asinius. As if indeed

the senate would have dared to proceed as they did, unless instigated by Tiberius. Here we see the emperor entertaining as a chosen guest a man whom he hated, and had resolved to destroy; and to prolong his misery interceding with him to live, at the same time giving him the strongest assurance of his favor and protection. The hate and malice of Tiberius would be fed, and his revenge sweetened and intensified by prolonging the torments of his enemy. Thus he refined upon cruelty, and delighted in the exquisite suffering and lengthened tortures of his unhappy victims. Thus did Drusus for three years languish in confinement, before he was starved to death. So, too, Agrippina's imprisonment was protracted for the space of three long years, ere she was permitted to die of starvation.

Of all details, those of man's cruelty to man are far the most painful. We hasten to draw these details to a close. We are told by Suetonius that of twenty persons of the greatest eminence in Rome, whom he had chosen as counsellors in the administration of public affairs, scarcely two or three escaped the fury of his savage disposition.\* Upon one pretence or another all the rest were destroyed. It would not be difficult for Tiberius to find or invent some pretext for their destruction when he punished those whom his mother entrusted with the care of her funeral for this very reason and no other. Might not the poet well say, (and the lines were written while Tiberius lived:)

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\* Life Tib. Sec. 53.

“Obdurate wretch! too fierce, too fell to move  
The least kind yearnings of a mother’s love.”

Having shamefully neglected his mother in her last moments, and having failed to follow her remains to the tomb, he punished those who showed that respect to her last wishes, in which he of all men should not have been deficient. What did he not owe to the love of his mother? He owed the empire itself. He repaid the debt as we have seen.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### TRAITS OF CHARACTER, AND CERTAIN SAYINGS AND DOINGS OF TIBERIUS.

THE dissimulation of Tiberius (in vain we search for pleasing traits in the character of this man) appeared on his first interview with the senate, ere he had formally accepted at their hands the empire. The senate, having paid all honor to Augustus, and among other things having deified him, “and decreed a temple and religious worship to his memory,”\* now called upon Tiberius to take the head of the commonwealth. Instead of at once yielding to their invitation, Tiberius pretended that the burden was too great, the duties too onerous for one person to discharge,—that Augustus alone was

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\* Tac. An. book i. sec. 11.

capable of sustaining such a weight,—and that the different departments of public business should be filled by the best and ablest citizens.\* These reasons, and others, he urged in opposition to the wishes of the senate. Thus he played on and off—not declining the empire, but making as if he intended to decline it, when, too, almost all knew that what he said was sheer pretence. Some senators, however, were so much deceived by his manner as to suppose that he was sincere, and even went so far as to ask questions, and make propositions, with a view to meet his wishes and satisfy his modesty; but most deeply offended was he at those who unwittingly took him at his word, and inquired in what way he desired to share the sovereignty with another. This mode of proceeding exposed his duplicity at once, and showed to all how feigned a part he acted. Tiberius had sense enough to see this; and how he was stripped of all disguise. Nothing but the sole sovereignty of the empire would suit him; nothing less did he resolve to have. Still, with the dissimulation by which he was characterized, for quite a considerable time he spoke and acted as we have said. At length, as if overborne by the persuasions of the senate, he reluctantly acceded to their importunate request. What a piece of acting was this on the part of Tiberius. But it accorded with the deceitfulness of his whole conduct after he became emperor.

During the commotions in Pannonia and Germany,

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\* Tac. An. Book i. sec. 11.



which followed his accession to the empire, while the legions were in a state of insurrection, he amused the populace with various false pretences that he would leave the city, and by his presence still the legions. He made every preparation, and for a time deceived the most discerning. Each day it was thought he would depart; but nothing was farther from the mind of Tiberius than leaving Rome at this time. All this show of departure was a mere pretence. It was a good while before the people waked up from the delusion.

The envious nature of Tiberius appeared in his relations with Germanicus. When this prince had recovered the prestige which Varus had lost among the Germans, and had also gained no small renown by his victories, Tiberius, disquieted by his success, recalled him to Rome, pretending that the unsettled state of affairs in the East required his presence there. Every one knew that this was not true, and that Tiberius could not sleep because of the laurels of his adopted son. In this recall Tiberius was actuated solely by envy; he was not governed in the least by the good of the state. He wished to detach Germanicus from the soldiers, by whom he was so much loved. Germanicus was altogether too honorable to attack the authority of Tiberius, and this latter could not appreciate the high-minded character of the former. How differently Augustus acted toward Tiberius when he was commander-in-chief in Germany. Augustus was greatly pleased with the success of his step-son, and frankly told him so; but Tiberius, at the success of his adopted son, Germanicus, harbored hate, distrust, and malice; and soon as he could removed

him from his important post to a less favorable scene of action.

A curious story is told of Tiberius by Dion Cassius, showing the emperor's skill in divination. He had a grandson named after himself, and another named Caius, son of Germanicus. Knowing the destinies of both, and that Caius would succeed to the empire, to the exclusion of the other, it is reported that one day the emperor said to Caius, "you will command my grandson to be put to death, but you will afterwards be killed yourself."\*

We are told by the same writer, that Tiberius put to death all the foreign astrologers and magicians, and banished those that were born at Rome, though he was himself perpetually with Thrasyllus, whom he consulted every day about futurity, being himself very skillful in that science.†

Again, from the same source: "The senators being importunate with Tiberius to suffer the month of November to be called by his name, because he was born in that month, he said to them, 'What would you do, gentlemen, if you should happen to have thirteen Cæsars?'"‡ We are farther told by the same author, that he had a mind that the greatest part of the senate might be destroyed after his death, having often that ancient verse in his mouth:

" — Whene'er I die,  
May all mankind dissolved in ashes lie!"

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\* Life of Tiberius.

† Dion Cassius. vol. i. p. 221.

‡ Ibid. p. 224.

Yet more, he often said that he thought Priam happy to see his kingdom and country perish with him.\*

One of the things told of Tiberius is this. He had a very particular friend, by name Sextus Marius. This Marius was a person of great wealth: so much so, that once having a difference with one of his neighbors, he invited him to stay two days at his house, on the first of which he ordered the other's house to be pulled down, and next day employed so many hands that it was entirely rebuilt, and made finer and nobler than before. The master of the house being astonished at it, he said, "That it was in his power to be revenged on his enemies, and to reward his friends just after the same manner." This Sextus Marius, having a daughter extremely handsome, and fearing lest in his infamous amours, Tiberius might be familiar with her, sent her out of Rome. Tiberius divining the reason, and being exceedingly incensed, wholly regardless of their friendship, had him accused of having committed incest with his own daughter, and he was put to death.†

Under the consulship of Taurus Statilius, and L. Libo, Tiberius prohibited the use of wrought silks, and gold plate, except at sacrifices.‡

When Tiberius returned from Rhodes to Rome, after an absence of nearly eight years, he expected confidently, from various prodigies and predictions, to obtain the empire. Even in his youth, Scribonius, the astrologer, had predicted that he would come in time to be king,

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\* Dion Cas-ius. vol. i. p. 257

† Dion Cassius. vol. i. p. 256.

‡ Ibid. p. 220.

but without the usual badge of royal dignity; the rule of the Cæsars being as yet unknown. A few days before he left Rhodes, an eagle, a bird never before seen in that island, perched on the top of his house. And the day before he received intelligence of the permission granted him to return, as he was changing his dress, his tunic appeared to be all on fire. We have narrated how Thrasyllus, the astrologer, upon sight of the ship that brought the intelligence, said that "good news was coming."\*

Tiberius, we are told, had such aversion to flattery, that he would never suffer any senator to approach his litter, as he passed the streets in it, either to pay him a civility, or upon business. And when a man of consular rank, in begging his pardon for some offence he had given, attempted to fall at his feet, he started from him in such haste that he stumbled and fell.†

Being once called "lord," by some person, he desired that he might no more be affronted in that manner.‡

During his reign he often gave out that he would visit the provinces and armies, and made preparations for it almost every year, by taking up carriages and ordering provisions for his retinue in the municipia and colonies. At last he suffered vows to be put up for his journey and safe return, insomuch that he was called jocosely by the name of Callipides, who is famous in a Greek proverb, for being in a great hurry to go forward, but without ever advancing a cubit.§

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\* Suet. Tib. sec. 14.

† Ibid. sec. 27.

‡ Suet. Tib. sec. 27.

§ Ibid. sec. 38.



Upon the death of his son Drusus, the ambassadors from the people of Ilium coming rather late to offer their condolence, he said to them by way of banter, as if the affair had already faded from his memory, "And I heartily condole with you on the loss of your renowned countryman, Hector."\*

His daughter-in-law, Agrippina, after the death of her husband, complaining upon some occasion with more than ordinary freedom, he took her by the hand, and addressed her in a Greek verse, to this effect: "My dear child, do you think yourself injured because you are not empress?"†

On his island nothing pleased Tiberius more than his safety from sudden intrusion; yet not long after his arrival in Capreæ, a fisherman coming upon him unexpectedly, when he was desirous of privacy, and presenting him with a large mullet, he ordered the man's face to be scoured with the fish; being terrified at the thought of his having been able to come upon him from the back of the island, over such rugged and steep rocks. The man while undergoing his punishment, expressing his joy that he had not likewise offered him a large crab which he had also taken, the emperor ordered his face to be farther lacerated with its claws.‡

In calling over his prisoners, when one of them requested the favor of a speedy death, Tiberius replied, "You are not yet restored to favor." And when one Carnilius, who was under prosecution, had killed himself, he exclaimed, "Carnilius has escaped me." §

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\* Suet. Tib. sec. 52.

† Ibid. sec. 58.

‡ Sec. 60.

§ Sec. 61.

## CHAPTER V.

## SERVILITY OF THE ROMAN SENATE.

A MAN is only a man when he is true to his own convictions. Then he rises almost above the weakness of humanity, and takes his seat among the gods. He is not governed by any selfish motive; he does not take his own interest into consideration. He forgets this; he overlooks this. Duty is all-prevalent with him; what God requires—what conscience dictates to be done. A high sense of patriotism distinguished the early ages of the republic, and laid the foundation of its future greatness; but at the time of which we write a great change had come over the spirit of that august body, the Roman senate. Its early forms were preserved,—it had its daily sittings,—the consuls presided over its deliberations,—it passed decrees, it heard accusations,—acquitted or condemned,—but all its acts were but an echo of the wishes of the emperor. They studied simply to please him, with very little regard to the innocence or guilt of the party arraigned. There was no hope for those whom the emperor, instigated by hate or malice had foredoomed to death.

In the very first year of the reign of Tiberius, the right of voting for magistrates, in the Field of Mars, was now for the first time taken from the people and

vested wholly in the senate.\* Thus passed away the last vestige of freedom from the people;—henceforth their voice was of no account; and a great step was taken toward imperialism. Augustus had gradually prepared the way for this surrender of rights on the part of the people, and when the hour of disfranchisement arrived, “they grumbled and submitted.” The reservation of the right to the senate was not of much use; for as Tiberius showed more and more the instincts of a tyrant, his frown was greatly dreaded; none dared to oppose his will, and his word was law. None pretended to dispute his absolute will.

We have an instance of the servility and affected devoted devotion of the senate to Tiberius, when that body met to urge upon him the acceptance of the empire.

We have already referred to this: while Tiberius seemed to hesitate, urging first one excuse and then another, the senators, all the more importunate from the long delay, at length burst into tears, “and at times fell prostrate at the knees of Tiberius.”† The most eminent men of that body, took part in this scenic display; the “senators,” says Tacitus, “dreading nothing so much as the crime of knowing his character.” We are told of Haterius, a man of illustrious character, who having by some remark in the senate on that day, offended Tiberius, went to the palace next day to apologise. In a suppliant posture he clasped the emperor’s knees; and in that moment Tiberius, entangled perhaps by the petitioner, or making a false step, fell to the

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\* Tac. An. book i. sec. 15.

† Ibid. sec. 12.

ground. This provoked the soldiers upon duty. Haterius was saved from their fury; it was through the influence of Livia that Haterius was saved.\* Tiberius was disarmed of his resentment through the solicitations of his mother.

It was not however until after the departure of Tiberius from Rome, and his residence on the island of Capræ that the senate began to shew its true character. In proportion as Tiberius displayed the vindictiveness of his nature, as he broke out in acts of cruelty, and was swept farther and farther from his early moderation, the more pliant became the senate; the more ready tools in his hands to inflict any punishment he might suggest. We see this ready subserviency brought out in the case of Nero and Drusus, and their mother Agrippina. We have already more than once adverted to the case of these unhappy young men, and their still more unhappy mother. Hardly was Drusus, the son of Tiberius dead, when, as we have seen, as the next heirs of the empire, they were introduced to the senate by the emperor, and recommended to their care. The scene was very imposing. The consuls went forth to meet the princes; they presented them to the emperor; and Tiberius, taking them by the hand, made a speech on the occasion, which drew forth tears from the whole assembly. But a little while did the princes enjoy this favor: Tiberius, in the beginning of the following year, his jealousy having been excited by Sejanus, and fearing the popularity of the young men, in a second speech to the senate, "he desi-

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\* Tac. An. book i. sec. 13.



red that all might be on their guard, not to inflame minds of young men with ideas of power, and by consequence, with a spirit above their station.\* This hint sufficed. Whatever might be their feeling as individuals, or whatever their regards for the posterity of Germanicus, or their pity for the young princes, especially their love for Nero in particular, they studied from this time not to let escape any words or official acts which might be construed in their favor; or as departing from the line of policy laid down by the emperor. On the contrary, from this time began the war against the house of Germanicus, and against his friends. When the friends of Germanicus, and of his widow, were singled out for destruction, though the senate well knew from what quarter the blow came, and the *animus* of the accusation; they interposed no barrier, but arraigned and condemned to please the emperor: and this too though they knew that these accusations portended the coming doom of the young princes. Fear stifled every generous emotion in their bosoms. They hardly foresaw that they in their turn might be proscribed, and fall by the same capricious cruelty.

As the emperor withdrew his favor from the young men, the senate kept time with the change, not investigating the crimes charged; but simply recording their edict in conformity with the written statements sent from Capreæ. Thus without a crime, these illustrious youths were declared public enemies, through the sycophancy of the Senate, without a voice in their favor. And at

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 17.

last when Agrippina perished so miserably, this enslaved body, pretending to act as representatives of public opinion, and occupying so high a place in the councils of the nation, passed an act extolling the clemency of the emperor "that she was not strangled, and thrown into the common charnel-house."\* What a piteous spectacle does this body present, thanking the emperor for such indulgence to his own daughter-in-law, guiltless of any crime; and ordaining by a decree that the day of her death, with that of Sejanus (they both expired on the same day) should be observed as a solemn festival, with annual offerings on the altar of Jupiter.†

As a further evidence of the servility of the senate, we may mention that there were never wanting members of that body who were ready to act as prosecutors in the case of those whom Tiberius, or his minister Sejanus, wished to condemn. How thin was the veil after all, which the action of the senate cast over the malice of the emperor and his minister. In the cases, for instance, of Silius and his wife Sosia Galla, who were devoted to destruction by Tiberius, the one for his attachment to Germanicus, Sosia for her friendship to his wife, no less a person than Varro, consul for that year, "undertook the despicable part of public prosecutor."‡

So when Nero and Agrippina were denounced to the senate as enemies to the state, a leader soon appeared who initiated the business, so that the enemies of Tiberius might be condemned in due form. It would not

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\* Tac. An. book vi. sec. 23.

† Ibid. b. iv. c. 17.

answer if the forms of justice were not strictly observed. Men of birth and standing were always found, who, insensible to shame and disgrace, were ever ready to offer themselves as the minions and tools of the emperor. They little minded the disgrace, or even infamy of an act, if it would but tend to their advantage, and secure the favor of the emperor. Office and emolument, and the favor of Tiberius, or even of Sejanus, in the day of his power, outweighed every other consideration. So low can man creep when the nobility of nature is gone; and every noble sentiment is lost in servile fear, or the most intense selfishness. Yet as a reward for all his devotion to the prince, and as showing how it was estimated by Tiberius, he wished, as we have seen, to immolate the greater part of the senate at his funeral pyre. Tiberius did not lack discrimination; he was no fool; and he estimated at its just value the zeal and devotion of the conscript fathers.

There is a most melancholy instance of the cringing servility of senators, and of the infamous depths to which they would descend, in the case of that unfortunate man, "Titus Sabinus, a Roman knight of high distinction." Four men of senatorial rank, and aspiring to the consulship, conspired together to entrap Sabinus in his talk, so as to be able to present to the emperor in form an accusation against him. One of the number, Latinius Latiaris, who had some connection with Sabinus, pretending to fraternize with him in his griefs and grievances, induced him to converse freely of the pride, arrogance, and daring ambition of the minister; the emperor himself did not escape. Latiaris,



dissembling, pretended to feel as Sabinus did, and to participate in his sentiments; sharers of a common grief, a close friendship was formed between the two. Availing himself of their friendship, Latiaris invited Sabinus into a house where his three confederates were concealed, prepared to overhear what might be said at the interview, and to report to the emperor. Accordingly Latiaris introduced Sabinus into a particular room in the house, where, he artfully said, they might converse unheard, and free from interruption. In a cavity between the roof of the house and the ceiling of the room, "three Roman senators," says Tacitus, "lay concealed, their ears applied to chinks and crevices, listening to conversation, and by fraud collecting evidence."\* Latiaris was to draw out Sabinus to discourse freely of his grievances, of Sejanus, of Tiberius, and of the many evils of the existing government, and so furnish for the use of the four conspirators materials for an accusation in due form. The plot succeeded; the unfortunate Roman knight was betrayed by one whom he regarded as a bosom friend. An accusation was made out and sent to the emperor, with a memorial, "to their own disgrace and infamy, setting forth the whole of their conduct."

On the first day of the new year, [A. D. 28.] Sabinus, in a letter of the emperor, was denounced to the senate in language most severe and peremptory; and this body, almost without a moment's hesitation, condemned him to death. "His steady attachment to the house of

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 69.



Germanicus," says Tacitus, "was his only crime." Sabinus was seized without delay, and, though it was a day dedicated to religious worship, muffled in his robe, his voice almost stifled,—he was dragged through the streets to immediate execution.\*

The whole city was struck with consternation. Who was safe if such men, so high in station, aspiring even to the consulship, could descend to such low arts, to practices so vile and debasing, and then publish them abroad to the world. We need not wonder, after such an instance as the above, in which by their act the entire body concurred; that as Tiberius grew more cruel, and incessantly demanded new victims, the senate, trembling with fear, was ever ready to gratify his demands. We have seen how knights and senators cringed to Sejanus, we see them now crouch as whipped dogs, at the feet of the emperor; and we may well conclude that the majesty of Rome has departed; and the days of its strength are over. The period of its slow but sure decay is begun.

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\* Tac. An. book iv. sec. 70.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DECADENCE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

“But when Tiberius succeeded, who had more of the beast in him than the man, and governed for the most part without reason or justice, by a most barbarous and cruel will and pleasure, the clay began to moulder, and the foundations of this kingdom to grow weak and decay.”—Prid. Con.

THE eye must contemplate with pleasure the rise of that new monarchy, which, as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is yet to fill the whole earth. It is to take the circuit of the globe: and be established on the ruins of earthly monarchies. The heart cannot but swell with hope at the prospect yet to be realized, of a kingdom to be established on a basis of righteousness, with the Lord of heaven and earth as its acknowledged, if not visible head. This accords with the sublime dictum of the prophet: “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord and his name one.”\*

The foreshadowings of this kingdom are seen in the dawn of time; they form the subject of prophecy from the beginning. The human heart is inspired with hope for the future of our world from this source alone. This is the polar star of night. Voices from every part of the earth conspire with this sound, from heathen temples as well as from Christian altars.

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\* Zech. xiv. 9.

We are apt to think of prophecy as for the most part fulfilled; and we cast our eye backward, as if to find in the desolation of cities, and the overthrow of nations, the memorials of the art divine. The ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, the overthrow of Tyre, the condition of Egypt, fallen from its high estate, the desolations of Idumea, these wrecks of the past, fill the eye and engage the attention; they confirm the sure word of prophecy; but they constitute a small part of the prophetic page. The prophecies remaining to be fulfilled, are far grander in proportion and greater in significance, than those already accomplished. They stretch out in bold perspective: they include immense results; they announce a change in dynasties, more universal and thorough, more radical and lasting than the world has yet seen. The governmental changes in our world which have already taken place, are but preparatory to that general upheaving of the earth, and of worldly policy, which will precede, accompany, and perfect God's plan for the regeneration of our earth, and the establishment of his kingdom in our world.

It is glorious to think that we are permitted to look forward to the full and complete accomplishment of prophecy. The skein has but begun to be unravelled; it is well that it is so. Who will now be able to say with Porphyry, that the books were written after the events had transpired. In respect to the fulfilment of prophecies relating to coming events, the greatest the world has yet seen, it will be vain to resort to this commonplace subterfuge. Beside the events yet to take place, and which form the chief subject of pro-

phesy, will change the face of the whole world. They will be patent to all; open to all. No eye but will see, must see; and God's word will be established as the sun in the heavens.

It is an infirmity of most minds, that they are always looking back on the past, as if the days then were better than these, or else brooding sadly over the darkness of the present hours, the gloom of time. We should take our stand on the mount of vision; and, with Isaiah, see and paint, the glory which is to come. This is faith, the faith of antiquity. This is the faith of all the holy prophets; the transporting view which opened up to their sight as the vail was withdrawn, and the spectacle of a redeemed earth rose upward as from chaos,—the waters retired, and the tabernacle of God was among men. This desired consummation they never forget; their faith never lets go its hold. This was the joy set before them through all the varying scenes of life; and amply repaid them for all they suffered or relinquished.

All this future is connected with that epoch which in the course of this work we have now reached. The point of decay in the Roman empire, was the time fixed for the first establishment of the kingdom of Christ; or the fifth universal monarchy. "And therefore the strength of the Roman empire beginning to decay in the reign of Tiberius, then accordingly commenced the beginning of the kingdom of the Messiah here upon the earth."

The particular point of time, "the decay of the kingdom of the Romans," as marking the precise period



when "the kingdom of the Messiah should commence," is thus expressed : \*

"And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men : but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."† At this juncture, so critical, so important, rendered so by such a concurrence of events, "the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."‡

The beginning of the decay of the Roman empire, under Tiberius, is a prophetic period, and marks the rise of the kingdom of God. To this we should now chiefly look, to this direct our attention. The Roman empire was the most powerful the world ever yet saw ; it lasted longer than any other. The Persian empire was of short duration ; the Macedonian rule, under Alexander, still shorter ; even the Chaldean monarchy so proud, so magnificent, sparkling like the morning, vanished soon away as smoke, or as the sun's rays on the horizon,—but the Roman republic, as it rose by slow degrees, so it endured the longest of all. It was also the strongest empire. In this particular it answered exactly the voice of prophecy. As it was the

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\* Prid. Con. We do not say with Prideaux, "the kingdom of the Messiah, in the erection of his church here upon the earth." The church proper does not constitute the kingdom of the Messiah,—much less the Gentile church apart from that of the Jewish.

† Dan. ii 43.

‡ Ibid. viii. 44.

strongest of the four universal empires, it was to be the last of its kind. There were to rise on earth, as from the sea, four general empires; this number could not be exceeded—it could not be lessened. Just four, and no more. And what answer does history give to this statement? Is it not confirmatory of it? But the same world-wide prophecy that spoke of the four, has spoken also of the kingdom of God on the earth: and whose rise was fixed at the very point of time when the Roman empire should begin to decay.

Four great empires have arisen which have covered the earth with desolation and blood. They have been as scourges in the hand of God to afflict the nations for their wickedness: even his favored people have felt the rod of his anger in the hands of these mighty ones: when their work was accomplished they passed away. A fifth empire is yet to arise, beneficent in its rule; and to be established by God himself. Of this it is said, in terms express and clear:

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.”\*

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\* Isaiah ix. 7.

## Book Ninth.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### TETRARCHY OF HEROD PHILIP.

[A. D. 62.]

PART of the tetrarchy of Philip was situated about the sources of the Jordan; where this river of sweet waters takes its rise. Part also was on the eastern side of the lake,—how far towards the Haouran we do not know; on the south the tetrarchy of Philip reached, we suppose, as far the city of Pella, where it came in contact with the northern line of the Peræa, belonging to his brother, Herod Antipas. Beautiful is the country, a fair and fertile plain on both sides of the river of upper Jordan; roses bloom, and trees adorn the river side.\* The capital of Philip was situated at the fountains of Jordan; this he had enlarged and embellished; and had changed its name from Paneas to Cesarea in honor of the reigning Cæsar. He had also enlarged and embellished Bethsaida,† near where the waters of

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\* Irby and Mangles, p. 286—291.

† Joseph. Antiq. book xviii. sec. 1.

the river empty into the lake of Galilee. This city he had called *Julias*, after Julia, the unhappy daughter of the emperor Augustus.

It was pleasing to see this man, occupying an important position, and governing a considerable locality, ruling justly, and chiefly concerned in the good of his subjects. He resided constantly among them; he went from place to place administering justice, accompanied by a few friends. If in any place a complaint was brought, it was instantly attended to; "his tribunal, on which he sat in judgment, was set down immediately;" he heard and decided the case, the guilty were punished, and those that had been accused unjustly, were absolved. His whole government was wise, moderate and humane. He did not ignore, or violate the law of Moses, in marriage.

He was content to live at home with the wife he had chosen, finding his happiness in the discharge of his duties, and in the relation of husband, brother, and friend. Such was the confidence that Archelaus reposed in his brother, Herod Philip, that when he first went to Rome, after the death of his father, to obtain the confirmation of the kingdom by Cæsar Augustus, he left his brother Philip in charge of his affairs at Jerusalem. Archelaus was not afraid to entrust Philip with the government of Judea during his absence; and this at a most critical conjuncture. The whole life of Philip was of a piece with this beginning; he was faithful to Archelaus; and when entrusted with the government of Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, and of the nation of the Bataneans also, as his particular share of his father's dominions. he was



found worthy of the trust. We hear of no discord in his principality; of no acts of cruelty, rapine, or revenge. He was a beneficent as well as wise ruler. For the period of thirty-seven years he reigned; honored and loved; and when he died, was buried in a monument which he had built at Paneas. His obsequies were performed with great pomp. Philip left no sons; Tiberius therefore took his principality, and annexed it to the province of Syria. His death preceded that of Tiberius a little over two years.\*

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## CHAPTER II.

### SCENE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES, IN THE TETRARCHY OF HEROD PHILIP.

PHILIP was living when there occurred within his toparchy a scene of the greatest possible interest. It took place not very far from Bethsaida, "situate at the lake of Gennesareth;" which from a village had, at this time, been advanced to the dignity of a city.†

All was tranquil in this region. There was no wicked ruler to fear. At some considerable distance from the city of Bethsaida, somewhat remote, also, from villages and towns that then so thickly studded the country, was

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\* Joseph. Antiq. book xviii. c. iv. sec. 6.

† Ibid. chap. ii. sec. 1.

a solitary spot, where shepherds fed their flocks, and cattle were pastured. How near it was to the Jordan we do not know; it was probably watered by some of the numerous tributary streams which flow in that region.\*

It was a still country scene. The air was soft, the morning serene. The Jordan flowed not far off; there, also, at no great distance, reposing in its beauty, and reflecting the mountains on either side, was the lake of Galilee. At the point where the Jordan passed into the lake, was the vessel, drawn upon the shore, which had brought Jesus and his disciples. Soon numerous vessels were drawn up alongside of this; for the people knew of the departure of Jesus from Capernaum, and had quickly followed. In the early morning many a vessel, filled with men, women, and children, was afloat; the sea was alive with every variety of craft; and the greatest anxiety was manifested not to lose sight of the Master. And shall we wonder that children eagerly followed Jesus also? Was he not the friend of little children? Did he not take them in his arms and bless them? Was he ever known to spurn a child from his presence? He looked upon them with ineffable pity and with love; he spoke to them in accents of tenderness. His engaging smile won their youthful, loving hearts. While the boats sailed gaily over the sea, propelled by the oar, or wafted by the early morning breeze, many ran swiftly on foot,—all eager to follow Jesus. They did not take into consid-

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\* Irby and Mangles, p. 286--291.

eration distance, time, or trouble. When does love think of the cost?

There was a large, watered plain; and, not far from the plain a mountain. The plain was richly covered with grass; while in the distance could be seen fields of waving grain. Drove of cattle were feeding on the grass, and large flocks of sheep. The shepherd, with his crook and well known voice, led his flock from place to place; in their innocent simplicity they followed. Flowers bedecked the plain along with the grass; and the bee, humming as he went, drew his waxen store from each opening flower. Men's minds were in tune with the scene; and even the sick revived, fed not only with the morning air, but with the knowledge that they would be healed by Jesus.

How different this scene from that which each day witnessed on the island of Capreæ. There, between the high mountains on the east and west end, was a sylvan spot, adorned with every variety of fruit tree; blooming also, with grain, and shut in from the world. Yet what bosom but must palpitate with fear—even under the shade of these spreading trees, and in this retired spot—from the presence of the imperial tyrant; whose contracted brow, whose frown, like a thick cloud, darkens joy wherever he comes. In the distance, as he is seen, walking slowly along, meditating cruelty,—what heart is moved to love? What child runs to share his embrace, or catch his smile? Even his grandson, Caius, does little else but study not to offend by word, look, or gesture, lest the fate of his two brothers should be his fate. All is dark and cheerless on the island; fear.

distrust, suspicion, fill every breast. The island is haunted by a fearful presence. The south-west wind is pleasant there in summer—but in vain it blows softly: the flowers bloom, and shed their fragrance in vain—for dread and tormenting fear have made the perturbed bosom insensible to joy—to the joy of winds, waves, smiling earth and serene sky.

Turning away from Tiberius and his island, we return to the country spot along the banks, or not very far from the banks of the upper Jordan, but a few miles from the source of that sacred stream. The day is passing away; the sweet and happy day; one of the days of the Son of man.

It is not for us particularly to dwell on the scene; it has been so often drawn both by pen and pencil,—the feeding of five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves of barley bread, and two small fishes, taken probably that day out of the neighboring lake. Leaving these details, we refer to the effect of the miracle,—a serious attempt on the part of the people to make Jesus King. This will form the theme of the following chapter.



## CHAPTER III.

THE ATTEMPT TO MAKE JESUS ASSUME THE TITLE OF  
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

FILLED with wonder, overpowered with awe, (had not God appeared upon the scene?) the people said, one to another, in words scarcely spoken above the breath—"This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." \* The vast multitude of hardy men were mostly Galileans, a bold and enterprising people. Jesus was, at this time, in the zenith of his fame; these Galileans had witnessed his wonders in Jerusalem; they had seen him doing the same works (works which only God could do, or those who were authorized by him) in Galilee, and now they see one of so marvellous a character, that transported with joy, they can afford to delay no longer; but whether he will comply or not, they resolve to make him king; to constitute Jesus their leader and captain; their Moses to effect their deliverance from the Romans, and to organize the nation on a new basis.

And were these people—these hardy Galileans—so far wrong, after all? When his miraculous conception and birth were announced to his virgin mother, by an angel, was it not said that God would give him *the throne* of his father David; that he should reign over

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\* John vi. 14.

the house of Jacob; and that of his kingdom there should be no end? The words are as express as they can be: God is to give to him the throne of his father David. As David sat on that throne—so is the son of David to ascend it also, and to rule with great power. If these words, in the mouth of an angel of God, mean anything, they mean just what they say. Of what use are words, if, because they are found in a particular book, and do not convey the sense you desire, you can affix to them almost any meaning you please. In this way the plain text of Scripture is distorted, (who would deal so with any other book?) and its harmony destroyed. The grand, uniform design of God, in making his ancient people the conservators and restorers of our world, is to a very great extent lost sight of by a mode of interpretation built upon men's fancies, not upon the express declarations of the written word.

When the Magi came from the East, and thrilled Jerusalem with the query, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" did they not expect to find the heir of the Jewish empire? Did they not speak of him as one who was *born* King of the Jews? Was not this his rightful title? Might he not claim it in virtue of his kingly descent? His genealogical table—does it not trace back his descent, in a direct line to David? And is it not the design of that table to establish the great fact that Jesus is the Son of David; and as such entitled to ascend the throne, with all regal honors, of his father David. Or will you allegorize, or spiritualize the words, so that they shall not mean what they say literally at all?

But mark further what the Magi say; "We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." To render homage to *Him* as king; not only as king of the Jews, but as King of kings, and Lord of lords; for Jesus sustains both these titles: as the Son of David, he is King of the Jews, and as David's Lord, he is the King of kings. Did not the Magi understand that the star which they saw first in their own land, presaged the birth of the King of the Jews? The star was God's herald of the birth of Jesus; and by a divine revelation he announced this to the Magi, either by a dream, or by an angel, or by a voice from heaven. They were divinely taught as well as divinely led. Long before had the voice of prophecy announced that the birth of the future King of the Jews should be signalized by a star. When then, it appeared in the far east, and God explained to his chosen messengers whose birth it inaugurated, no doubt dwelt in their minds—there was no cloud in their sky. And, consequently, when they reached Jerusalem they asked with undoubting faith, and without any fear of Herod—so jealous of an aspirant to the throne—"Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and we are come to worship him." Without worldly policy, and free from fear, they boldly, but with the simplicity of children, ask the question. They had not the fear of man, but of God, before their eyes. Herod on his throne gave rise to no question of expediency in their minds. They had a great errand to do; and this they did, though they incurred no small risk, and would surely have perished, had it not been for Divine interposition.



These sages who came to Jerusalem, led by a divine hand, we may readily believe were true interpreters of Jewish prophecy; and it is clear that they looked for and expected to find what their words declare, really and truly, the king of the Jews. Thus they addressed him; and thus paid to the new born child, royal homage.

When a council was called, by order of the king, of men expert in Jewish law, the inquiry proceeded on the grounds that prophecy authorised the expectations, The inquiry was a simple one. It was not a question as to whether such a personage was predicted; this question was not even raised. That was a point settled. The question was, where is he to be born? What do the sacred books say as to *the place* of his birth? The answer to this was easy. Many centuries before the event, the prophet Micah had said, the promised King of the Jews would be born at Bethlehem. The place of his birth corresponded with his lineage; as he was to proceed from David, so he would be born on the spot—within the bounds of the domain where Jesse lived—where David kept his father's sheep; and whence step by step, he rose to the throne.

Here, then, are these interpreters, like the inspired Magi, fully possessed with the grand idea that their coming Messiah was to be King of the Jews;—that the titles were synonymous. Had they made a mistake? Was it a misnomer? How often is the Messiah spoken of by the prophets as King of Israel. By this title do they foreshadow his great dignity; and consequently it was not a vague title—but clear, explicit, definite.



Otherwise it would greatly mislead; and the result would be bad.

At last the Magi find the child. What then? They pay him the homage of a king; and, according to the custom of the East in approaching monarchs, they present the new-born King of the Jews princely gifts. Their joy was beyond expression; but it was the joy of faith. In other words it was the joy of all the holy prophets who had written of this event. It was a joy built on the same foundation as theirs; seeing, as they did, that through this King, and through him alone, salvation would come to our world. It could come through no other source. The Magi, inspired by the same spirit as prophets and patriarchs, saw this also: and in the King whom they worshipped, and at whose feet they laid their gifts, they saw the accomplishment of all that the prophets had written. He was no ordinary king in their eyes; they had no low, carnal views of his kingdom; it was not a picture of worldly glory and power which they drew: still they saw a real, actual kingdom in the far distance, built on a new basis, that of the resurrection of the "Prince of the kings of the earth" from the dead.

Not at once would this child ascend the throne; he must pass through death to attain a seat so high; and establish a kingdom which would endure forever.

We must not suppose that the men who undertook to make Jesus king on the present occasion, were inspired with the same views as the Magi. The Magi, as competent witnesses of the birth of Christ, were extraordinarily illuminated; they were filled with the

spirit; but these people of whom we speak had no other than carnal views of Christ and his kingdom. They took their model of a kingdom from that of the Roman empire; they wished to overturn the nations by the mere might of an irresistible arm, that as a nation the Jews might rise to the first place. This was the height of their ambition; and shows clearly that they understood not the words of the prophets, as they were read every Sabbath day in the synagogue. Had they understood their own writings, they would have seen that Jesus must suffer before he could ascend the throne of his father David. They would not have been in such haste, they would patiently have waited until the right time arrived. But they were carried away by the miracle of the loaves and fishes; and imagined that one who possessed such power on the earth could easily subdue the nations, and reap for the Jewish people the highest earthly renown. But Jesus took himself from them, and departed alone, directing his disciples to return without him, and saying that he would join them in due season. They obeyed; and as the people saw them embark without Jesus, they waited all night in the expectation of seeing him the next morning, and carrying out their selfish views.

## CHAPTER IV.

## JESUS IN THE MOUNTAIN AND ON THE SEA.

THE hours of the night passed on, one by one. Jesus was in a mountain alone. We may imagine his prayer. It was "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This was the work he came to do; this was his father's business which he was to perform, as he said to his parents in the temple, in the presence of the doctors. He never lost sight of this. Prophecy had said—"He must see his seed; and the pleasure of the Lord must prosper in his hand." God had said to Moses—"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." The prophet Isaiah had said, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." This was the end which was to be gained, and for this in the lonely mountain he prayed,—pouring forth strong cries in the anguish of his spirit.

He shall see "the travail of his soul"—saith the prophet. What Jesus underwent in secret who can tell? what groans, lamentations, and tears. How he wept, how he sighed. Thus was it on this mountain. He had seen little to encourage him in the disposition of the people that day; they were still carnal; and were deceived by Satan. The wonderful work which he had

performed, had given them no true knowledge of his character, or the nature of his sublime mission. They did not rise to the high and mysterious idea—the spiritual conception—of a world redeemed from Satan by the death of Christ; by his resurrection from the dead. They did not see how death must necessarily be destroyed in the nature which had sinned, so that the law of God might be fully vindicated, and the name of God be glorified. This was hid from them; they were not in harmony with the holy prophets; with the spirit and true import of their writings. This is what Jesus deplored, that they were still so much under the influence of a worldly spirit, and so far from the way of righteousness.

The people for the most part slept; some had gone; others had remained; their minds were filled with the hope of triumph through Jesus. It may be that some waked and talked, long after the great body had fallen asleep. At length all slept, and deep silence reigned around. In the fourth watch Jesus came down from the mountain, and walked forth upon the sea; the sea was to him the same as dry ground. The yielding waves, owning the presence of Him who made them, formed a solid path over their wild, heaving surface. Loudly blew the wind; boisterous rose the waves. The night was dark. Since the day closed the wind had arisen; it did not abate; it blew stronger and stronger; louder and louder. Hour after hour passed away, and still the waves rose high, and the wind blew loud. It rushed along the sea; the waves dashed heavily against the shore and the mountain sides. The disciples who had embarked made but little headway against the stiff



gale, and the rolling waves. What were the thoughts that engrossed their minds? They thought of what they had seen that day; and they recalled other wonderful works that Jesus had done. Their faith was strengthened; every succeeding display of his power tended to increase their faith, and make them stronger in the Lord. They needed all the aid they received—so little did the mission of Jesus accord with man's thoughts or actions.

Suddenly they see, walking on the sea, the form of a man. They suppose that they behold a spirit, and cry out in alarm. Jesus says unto them, "It is I; be not afraid." How simple the words! How assuring the language! It is the voice of a friend; this is the voice which they hear; the well-known voice of Jesus. Are these simple, encouraging words, uttered at such a time—in the midst of a scene almost beyond the imagination to conceive—the words of an impostor, a deceiver of the people? We think not. What is there of boast in them—of exaggeration? Could they be simpler? Yet had man ever seen anything like this before? Were they mistaken? They were several miles from the shore. Moreover, Jesus steps on board; and they see and touch him, as they did after his resurrection. The power that broke the grave, enabled Jesus to walk on the sea when agitated with all the fury of a tempest; and the witnesses were the same in both cases. You must either receive their testimony, or give up both these great facts as the wildest dreams of an exuberant fancy. Shall we do this, and let go the hope and anchor of the human soul? Oh, God!

what are we without these facts? And *where* are we? On what an ocean tost—on what wildly heaving billows! Is there any rest for the soul apart from Jesus and the doctrine of the resurrection? None whatever. Tears course down our cheeks forever apart from this; our mourning continues; our hearts are oppressed; a strange melancholy seizes the soul; dark visions flit as spectres before the eye; we are shrouded in darkness. But Jesus walking on the sea—rising from the dead—ascending into heaven—remaining there for a time—and then returning to our earth to sit upon the throne of David, and to introduce an age of peace, and to establish universal righteousness—renews hope in the bosom where it had nearly expired, lifts from the heart an almost insupportable load, and gives us eternal life already here on the earth.

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## CHAPTER V.

### JESUS THE LIVING BREAD.

MIRACLES! what of them? We do not mean to depreciate miracles. We do not mean to rule them out because they are not conformable to everyday experience. We receive them as we do any other fact—on good evidence. We are bound to do so. We do not exclude God from the government of his own world; he is not governed by any necessity not occasionally to

intermit his own laws, or to depart from one uniform course of proceeding. We know that he does occasionally depart from established laws; as witness the dividing of the Red Sea, the miraculous character of which is attested by the manner in which it is always spoken of in Hebrew poetry, as well as from the narrative of the event itself. Every poetical reference speaks of it in the highest strain, as a most remarkable display of the power of God—as something altogether out of the common way—and designed to show his especial care over his chosen people. We adore God for these interpositions in behalf of his chosen people; from them we learn the greatest of all lessons—to trust in God.

But why need we revert to miracles? We have a living, everyday miracle, fully as remarkable, and as self-evident as the manna which fell in the wilderness. In itself that was typical of the bread which was to come down from heaven. It did but shadow forth the living bread of which we speak. Jesus proposes himself as this bread: "I am the bread of life." The Jews wanted a sign of the mission of our Lord, different from any which he had yet given; they were not satisfied with the proof which they had already received. The reason was their hearts were carnal, sold under sin. To meet their demand he calls himself the "bread of life," "The living bread which cometh down from heaven."

Here is an appeal to every man; one that comes home directly to his own bosom. It is testimony that cannot be evaded by sophistry; by the art or ingenuity of man; any more than the sensation of pain or pleasure can be evaded. It speaks for itself. It descends

to the lowest depths of man's nature, and speaks back in language that cannot be misunderstood. You wish to know if Jesus is God; if the Bible is true; you draw water from the well of salvation; that is you believe according to the testimony of Scripture, that Jesus is the Son of God, and you have in yourself the evidence of the fact. What is it that so nourishes my soul but feeding on the true bread, and believing the record that God hath given of his Son Jesus Christ. This is bread; this is life. This is a daily miracle. The manna falls before the door of your tent, not only in the morning, but in the evening. It is pure, sweet, and white; never was anything so delicious.

Sweet is the breath of early morning; balmy the soft winds; clear and serene the opening day. Night retires; he folds his wing; he walks over the misty mountain-top, and is hid in caves, in dark recesses, while day opens sweetly on the eye. With majestic step the hours advance; and each hour unfolds some new beauty—some new source of joy, or thought, or hope. The heart exults, it bounds at what it sees, feels, and explores. But what is opening day, with all its early charms and freshness, to that new life, that hidden life, that divine exhilaration of the soul, which is neither more nor less than the life of God breathed into the spirit? It may well be called a new life. It draws its resources from within; the fountain, the well is within. This fountain, this well, is Jesus in the soul. Every tendril may be cut that feeds the soul from the earth, and yet it lives; lives as it never did before. It is an oasis in a desert, smiling amid the barrenness.



The soul, fed from within, is not afraid of night ; as day retires it welcomes the friendly darkness, that as a garment hides from the glare ; and night-voices are heard, and sister spirits—angels clad in light—whispering words of cheer, and raising up the drooping soul. It walks along a hidden path with angels as its attendants. All the thoughts are pure ; hence the light that streams along the hidden path. It is not solitary as it seems to be ; unseen visitants walk along that silent, narrow path ; and the soul is ravished with pure delight. When sleep comes it is so soft and sweet ; and the heart reposes on God. How great is its rest. The night wind blows softly without ; the waves dash gently on the shore ; and the music of wind and wave is in harmony with the soul within ; and all contribute to its inward peace and sweeter rest. Rest, sleeper, rest ;—thy God is near,—the God of the winds and waves ; and hallow thou his name while he giveth his beloved sleep.

We need not be afraid of the terms of endearment that are found in the Bible. They flow from the fountain of purity ; they pamper no vitiated appetite. They are the language of pure love ; and answering chords are found in every heart, touched by the love that comes from heaven, the divine life from above. Whoever leans on the word of God, feeds on God. It is the word that is the bread of life ; and as the bread which we eat nourishes the body, so the living word (which is God) nourishes the soul ; and makes it one with God. The union is divine ; and it is real and actual as it is divine. Marriage is an emblem of this mysterious, hallowed union ;

that is marriage in its true sense, as originating with, and proceeding from God. Thus is the soul blended with God; and is in a mystical sense some part of God.

Hence it lives on God; or, with God; and has joys like God, superior far to any that proceed from the earth, or from our animal or sensual nature. Here is the source, the origin of all those endearing expressions which are found especially in Canticles; and these endearing terms, these fond, interchangeable expressions, between the soul and Christ, in the Song of songs, prove the divinity of the book, by foreshadowing the incarnation of God, and the union of the soul with Christ. The heart united closely to Christ, responds to every tender epithet; sees in the bridegroom Christ; and, like John the Baptist, finds all its joys more than fulfilled in a holy union with him.

Could God say more than the man Christ Jesus, when he said to the Jews—even mystifying the greater part of them by the expression, “My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed.” Shall a man blasphemously use such words as these? They are not the words of man but of God. They are of the same import as those where he says, in the same express, emphatic manner, “I am the fountain of living waters.” In either case the eye is directed to the Rock that is higher than we all; to none other than to God. Let us then ever remember that he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God, necessarily receives that word, lives on it as on bread, by the exercise of a constantly appropriating faith,

and is in possession of a living proof or sign that the doctrine of Jesus is true, eternal, divine; that the doctrine of God incarnate is "TRUTH." Thus is the question of Pilate, in reference to truth, answered; and also the great question of the Greek philosophers, from Anaxagoras to Plato, "What is the supreme good?"

## Book Tenth.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### ROME DURING THE LAST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF TIBERIUS CÆSAR.

[A. D. 32, 33, 34.]

CNEIUS Domitius was one of the consuls for the year thirty-two. He married some four years before Agrippina, one of the daughters of Germanicus. "Tiberius gave her away in person, but ordered the nuptial ceremony to be performed at Rome."\* Domitius was the grandson of Octavia, sister of Augustus; his father was one of the conspirators against Julius Cæsar. From this marriage came Nero, the sixth Roman emperor. He was not born at this time; not until the year of our Lord thirty-seven; the last year of the life of Tiberius. As one monster was going out of existence, in the same year another was born. Nero was born 15th December. Inauspicious nativity! The cloud over Rome continued to spread; years must elapse before it would pass away. In the dark procession Tiberius was to be followed by Caligula; Caligula by Claudius, brother of Germanicus; and Claudius by Lucius Domi-

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\* *An. Tac.* book iv. sec. 75.



tius, (after his grandfather) Nero. In his youth he was called simply Domitius; but when his mother, Agrippina, married Claudius, the emperor, he passed into the Claudian family, and took the name of Nero. When adopted by Claudius he was thirteen years of age. He was born, says Suetonius, "just as the sun arose."\*

Cneius Domitius, one of the consuls, as we have said, for this present year, A. D. 32, (a year so famous in the annals of Judea, and in which the name of Christ was spread so wide and far over the land) was one of the most infamous of men; in every way infamous. Little had Rome to hope for from his consulship. "His life," says one, "was a series of evil deeds." Suetonius paints his picture in the blackest colors. He appeared to think that his wife Agrippina was as depraved as himself; and that their offspring must be "detestable and pernicious to the public." He was of an extremely cruel disposition. When he was in the East with Caius Cæsar, he killed a freedman of his own for refusing to drink as much as he ordered him. In a village upon the Appian road, he suddenly whipped his horses and drove his chariot, purposely, over a poor boy, crushing him to death.\* At Rome he struck out the eye of a Roman knight at the Forum, only for some free language in a dispute between them.†

Such was the man who, under the emperor, occupied

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\* Suet. Life of Nero, s. 5.

† Dickens has made use of this incident in his story of "Two Cities," to characterise the temper of certain nobles of France toward the poor just before the revolution.

Suet. Life of Nero, sec. 5.

the first position in Rome. His private vices were worse than his public crimes. Agrippina was married very early to this man; and was probably inducted by him into a career of crime. She proved an apt scholar, and learned fast. She was some twenty years of age when Nero was born.

Camillus Scribonius was consul along with Cneius Domitius Ænobarbus, to give the full name of this latter. Happily nothing is said of Scribonius; and we may venture to augur well of him from his silence. But we have no reason to suppose that he, any more than Domitius, would oppose the will of Tiberius. Rome was wholly at the mercy of the emperor. Who was safe? who could rest in peace?

If we cast our eye over the imperial family, how great was the vacancy. Nero and Drusus were gone; Agrippina was gone; only Caligula, of the three brothers, remained. There were, however, two sisters beside Agrippina. Their names were Drusilla and Julia, or Livilla. These two Tiberius married in the subsequent year, (33); during the consulship of Servius Galba and Lucius Sylla; Drusilla to Lucius Cassius and Julia to Marcus Vinicius. In his letters to the senate Tiberius made honorable mention of these young men."\*

These sisters, with their brother Caligula, were brought up by their grandmother Antonia, that truly excellent woman and Roman matron.† It did not make them good;—the infection of the times spread to them;

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\* Tac. An. b. 6. s. 15.

† Suet. Life of Caligula, s. 24.

and nothing could exceed the scenes of infamy in the palace after the death of Tiberius. Caligula, disregarding all laws human and divine, took Drusilla from her husband Lucius Cassius, and kept her constantly, as if she were his lawful wife.\* Julia, or Livilla, plunged into every species of vice, and ended her life miserably.

Rome seemed to be a pool of vice in which many were drowned, and few escaped. An infection raged that withered with its touch. The very beams—the rafters, the walls of the houses, seemed to be tainted. A noxious vapor floated all around;—every breath inhaled the fatal miasm,—more poisonous than the exhalations of the Pontine marshes.

About this time, (A. D. 33.) Caligula married Claudia, (called by Suetonius Junia Claudilla) the daughter of Marcus Silenus, a man of the highest rank.† At the time of his marriage to Claudia he was twenty-one years of age. Even in his youth, says Suetonius, he could not conceal his natural disposition to cruelty and lewdness. He delighted in witnessing the infliction of punishments, and frequented taverns and other places of evil resort, disguised in a periwig and long coat; and was passionately addicted to the theatrical arts of singing and dancing.‡ Part of his time he spent in Rome, and part in Capreæ with his grandfather. “He studied,” says Tacitus, “the humors of Tiberius; he watched the whim of the day, and set his features accordingly; he was in dress and language the image of his

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\* Suet. Life of Calig. sec. 24.

† Ibid. sec. 12. Tac. An. b. 6. s. 20.

‡ Life of Calig. sec. 11.



grandfather. Neither the condemnation of his mother, nor the banishment of his brother, could extort from him one word of compassion. This young prince had the art to conceal under a vail of modesty the most detestable of human characters.”\*

It is said that Tiberius saw through his character; and that he often remarked, that “Caligula was destined to be the ruin of himself and of all mankind; and that he was rearing a hydra for the people of Rome, and a Phæton for all the world.”†

Domitius and Agrippina, Caligula, Drusilla, and Julia or Lavilla, in the imperial family, from their morals, will give some idea of Rome at this time; how far it was sunk in lasciviousness—steeped in crime. The restraints of religion had been removed; the worship of the gods was held in contempt; and men railed, even as now, at superstition and priestcraft. As if the need of the human heart did not call for religion; independently of the perversion of religion, or of its rites, by those priests who should adorn it by their sanctified lives.

Livy complained in his day of the decline of religion, and the philosophic indifference which prevailed. Men were too wise to be religious; to reverence God; to depend on Divine wisdom and guidance; they were wiser than God—stronger than God; they would take the reins in their own hands. Who can wonder that Rome was a cesspool of vice. Who has ever hardened himself against God and prospered. The pungent spirit of

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\* An. book 6. sec. 20.

† Life of Calig. sec. 11.



religion is necessary to serve as a corrective and antidote to vice.

When we find in the imperial family so much vice among both males and females, what must we think of the city itself. If polluted at the fountain the streams will be polluted, and in the cloud of vengeance which hung over it, we see the "wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."\*

We pass on with our detail of current events, as we wish to give the reader some idea of what was going in Rome from day to day, during the second, third, and last years of the ministry of Christ in Judea. Let the reader have both pictures in his hand at the same time; let him look on this and on that.

While Tiberius disposed in marriage the two daughters of Germanicus, Drusilla and Julia, or Livilla, while Caligula was married to Claudia, Drusus, the second son, still languished in confinement in the lower part of the palace. Death did not put an end to his sufferings until A. D. 33. We have briefly referred to his death by starvation. It will be recollected that it was through the artifices of Sejanus that Drusus was declared an enemy to the state by the senate; but after the death of Sejanus Tiberius did not relent. At one time it was reported "that the prince was on the point of being reconciled to his grandson;" but it did not prove true. Like his mother Agrippina, and his brother Nero, the unhappy young man was subjected to the most cruel

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\* Rom. chap i. ver. 18.

treatment in his imprisonment. He even suffered from the lash of the centurion who guarded him; spies were set to watch his looks, to listen to his words, his groans; a day-book was kept of all that transpired in the prison, and sent to Tiberius; even the "savage expressions" addressed to Drusus by the centurion, were recorded and submitted to the perusal of the emperor, who, after the death of Drusus, submitted the whole to the senate. Did he expect thereby to extenuate his crime in the eyes of that body? Toward the close of his life Drusus uttered the most dreadful imprecations against the emperor; imprecations extorted by his sufferings: "Reserve him," he said, "reserve him, ye gods, for your own just vengeance: let him fall a terrible example to the present age, and to all posterity." These words were read, after his death, to the senate. "The fathers, affecting to shudder at imprecations so eager and emphatic, interrupted the reading; but they felt the impression at their hearts." \*

Livia, the wife of Drusus, son of Tiberius, it will be recollected had been put to death for her complicity in the murder of her husband. For eight years her crime was hid, and then brought to light: the discovery was made A. D. 31, and her death soon followed. But Tiberius, as if not satisfied, in the following year [A. D. 32] permitted the senate to "thunder forth decrees against her memory, and her very statues." At the same time the property of Sejanus was ordered to be removed from the public treasury to the coffers of the prince.†

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\* Tac. An. book 6. sec. 24.

† Ibid. sec. 2.

Amid the degeneracy of the times, the fact that the first men in the senate acted as informers, and took this infamous part, whether actuated by fear, or the hope of reward, stands out with great prominence. We have referred to this; we speak of it again. "Some did it," says Tacitus, "without a blush, in the face of day; and others by clandestine artifices. The contagion was epidemic. Near relations, aliens in blood, friends and strangers, known and unknown, were, without a distinction, all involved in one common danger. The fact recently committed, and the tale revived, were equally destructive. Words alone were sufficient, whether spoken in the forum, or amidst the pleasures of the table, was immaterial. Whatever the occasion or subject, everything was a constructive crime. Informers struggled, as it were in a race, who should be first to ruin his man; some to secure themselves; the greater part infected by the general corruption of the times." †

The case of Cocceius Nerva, furnishes an instance of the melancholy days of Rome. He was one of the select few who, when Tiberius, A. D. 28, left Rome to return no more, accompanied him on that occasion. Tacitus says that "he was the constant companion of the prince."\* Since then some eight years had passed. At the time of the departure from Rome no one was so high in the favor of Tiberius as Sejanus; but two years had already passed since his fall;—the emperor had grown more cruel and capricious ever since. Each day the horizon grew darker; and none could tell upon whom the anger of the emperor next might fall. Beside, to a good man, it was deplorable to see the condi-



tion of the country. Cocceius determined to die; he would live no longer; while yet his name was untarnished he would leave the world. He was weary of life, and of the scenes that were constantly enacting before his eyes. Not fully understanding the great idea of trusting in God at all times, and for all things, he thought to secure himself against fortune by a voluntary death. He was "still in the vigor of health, and possessed of a splendid fortune." When Tiberius heard of his resolve, he visited him and sought to change his purpose. He even said that it would be a reflection on himself, and on his government; and entreated him to desist. Nerva made no reply; but abstaining from food, "shortly after closed his days."\* Thus, according to the historian, Cocceius Nerva "escaped with glory from the horrors of the time." He was "a man distinguished by his knowledge of laws both human and divine." Perhaps when in company with Tiberius, and a few learned men, he left Rome for Capreæ, he thought of the island chiefly as a place of retirement and of philosophic pursuits; not as a den of iniquity; and where the tyrant would nurse projects of revenge. Weary of all this, and seeing little hope of change, he left the stage when it was yet day.

It is the faith of the ancient Jewish Scriptures, no matter how dark the political horizon, how full of horror the times, how dark or obscure the prospect, how apparently hopeless the present condition of things,—to lift the vail, and to give us the assurance that sooner

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\* Tac. An. book 6. sec. 25.



or later, a time of peace, rest, and safety will arrive, with a complete deliverance from all fear. This is the chief theme of prophecy ; and imparts hope to the soul at all times and under all circumstances. Had Cocceius Nerva possessed this hope he would cheerfully have awaited his time, trusting in God. His philosophy was hardly equal to this. The death of Nerva occurred A. D. 33.

There had been in Rome for a little while a lull from the rage of prosecutions. This interval of rest did not last long ; the storm broke out anew, and with increased fury. Confidius Proculus was the first victim. On his birthday, amid the joy of a festival, with his friends and family around, he was suddenly seized and conducted to the senate house, where he was tried, condemned and hurried away to execution. The unfortunate man suffered on a charge of "violated majesty." One victim followed another in quick succession. Sancia, the sister of Proculus, was interdicted from fire and water. A whole family perished, that of Pompeia Macrina. Macrina was banished ; her father and brother were put to death. Her husband and her father-in-law fell victims to the cruelty of Tiberius. And what, think you, reader, was the crime ? It was this : it was charged "that their ancestor, Theophanes of Mitylene, had been the confidential friend of Pompey the Great ; and that divine honors were paid to the memory of Theophanes by the flattering genius of the Greek nation." \*

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\* Tac. An. b. 6. sec. 18.

Another victim was Sextus Marius. He had great possessions in Spain. To obtain possession of his wealth he was seized and condemned. Incest with his daughter was the imputed crime. Until now Tiberius had been free from the charge of avarice ; but when it was seen that the emperor seized and put to his own use the gold mines of Sextus Marius, then the motive of his death was made known. Marius was precipitated down the Tarpeian Rock.

There were at this time confined in prison, a large number of persons supposed to be implicated in the schemes of Sejanus. They were ordered to be put to instant death. Now ensued a horrible scene. The dead bodies of the slain were cast into the streets, where they remained unburied. Neither friends nor relations were permitted to pay the last rites ; they were not permitted even to weep ; and guards were placed to watch if any showed signs of sympathy or grief. A mother was executed because she shed tears for her son. At length the mangled and putrified bodies were cast into the Tiber. Tiberius would not permit them to be buried or burned. "All were struck with terror, and the last office of humanity was suppressed. Cruelty went on increasing, and every sentiment of the heart was smothered in silence."\*

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\* Tac. An. book 6. sec. 19.

## CHAPTER II.

## LEX MAJESTATIS.

THE title of this chapter—that is “the law of violated majesty,” under which, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, Confidius Proculus was put to death, was anciently a law of the Republic.

The object was (we have before made some reference to this) to punish those who should offend against the commonwealth ; impair its integrity, or weaken its authority. Any one conspiring against the republic, or guilty of mal-administration,—any general betraying an army, would be amenable to this law. “Men were arraigned for their actions, but words were free.”\*

How essential freedom of speech is to a free government, if it do not degenerate into licentiousness, it is easy to see. But words should be guarded, and speech sacred, at the same time that we express with freedom our thoughts, and convey our opinion of men and things. The acts of governments and of individuals form a proper subject of discussion. Stifle not free speech any more than you would the words of a friend conveying reproof, or admonitory in their character. The breath of liberty must not be stifled ; and freedom of speech, under easy limitations, is that living breath.

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\* Tac. An. book 1. sec. 72.

Under the emperors, beginning with Augustus, this law, with so imposing a name, and under the old republic so proper, was, says Tacitus, "warped to new devices." In the course of this work \* the reader has had some illustration of its nature, and mode of operation. We refer to it again. It was the little speck in the serene sky that at length darkened the land. Under it, as we have shown, informers grew and throve, the bane of just government. "The tribe of miscreants," as Suetonius styles them, continued to flourish until the time of Titus, who sought to extirpate them from the state. To this end, "he frequently ordered them to be scourged or beaten with sticks in the forum, and then, after he had obliged them to pass through the amphitheatre as a public spectacle, commanded them to be sold for slaves, or else banished them to some rocky islands." †

By a law of the Twelve Tables, defamatory libels were strictly prohibited. Those who did not keep within due bounds, who by false and calumnious expressions injured the reputation, and deeply wounded those whom they assailed, could be punished. One Nævius, a comic poet, was thrown into prison for certain defamatory (that is, slanderous) verses in one of his plays. This was a sufficient restraint both upon the pen and the tongue, agreeably to the scope of the old law. It did not make words a capital offence; though they might be malicious, injurious, and false.

Augustus, not satisfied with the penalties affixed to

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\* P. 67.

† Life of Titus, s. 8.



the old law for defamatory libels, by a forced construction made these libels capital; and the man who committed them was liable to the same pains and penalties as if he had committed treason, or, in other words, offended against the law of violated majesty.

Augustus had been induced to this unwarrantable stretch of power by the satirical pen of Cassius Severus, who did not spare the emperor, any more than others. The manner in which he was ridiculed excited the indignation of the prince; hence he made it a state crime. In time "every thing was a state crime. Whoever was obnoxious to the prince or his favorites, was brought within the law of majesty."

Tiberius followed in the steps of Augustus, as did all his successors down to Titus; during his short and brilliant reign the brood of informers hatched under this law of majesty were put down: but the law was revived under Domitian. Soon after Tiberius commenced his reign, "being asked by the prætor, Pompeius Macer, whether in such prosecutions judgments should be pronounced, returned for answer that the law must take its course." \* It really was not the law, but an undue stretch of prerogative. The judgments pronounced were not in accordance with law, they were the very essence of despotism.

From this hour,—though at first Tiberius used moderation in the enforcement of the law of violated majesty,—yet, under its sanction tyranny had full scope; it whet the sword; it introduced a "new trade; that of

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\* Tac. An. book 1. sec. 72.

a public accuser." Offences were not defined; this law was a great drag-net which took in every thing, every supposable case. It was impossible to avoid the law, for no one could tell what might be classed as an offence, and what not. We have already referred to the case of Apuleia Varilia, grand-niece of Augustus, who was charged with using defamatory words of Augustus and Tiberius;\* we will refer further to the case of two Roman knights, Falanius and Rubrius, both attacked under the new mode of prosecution. One of the charges against Falanius was that he had suffered a statue of Augustus to be put up at auction with the rest of his goods. The crime alleged against Rubrius was, that being sworn on the name of Augustus, he was guilty of perjury.† Tiberius made replies to both, showing that there was no good ground of accusation in either case; and in a wise spirit of moderation quashed both proceedings. Happy for him if he had been always thus wise and prudent, and kept within the bounds of justice and humanity! Instead of a scourge, he would have been a blessing to his subjects: on the roll of fame, and in the heart of humanity, what a different place he would have occupied, and what a halo would have shone around his name! Is it a little thing to have the esteem, the love, the veneration of posterity? How know we but that in some way this is connected with our future state; and that the praise or dispraise of those who live after us may affect us favorably or unfavorably in another life? Is there not some secret, invisible

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\* Page 87.

† Tac. An. book 1. sec. 72.

thread—some film-like cord—by which our actions in this world will be connected (at least for a time) with either our happiness or misery in the world to come? Does the guilty tyrant escape at death the results of all the calamities he has made others suffer, or the ruin he has spread around?

As another instance of prosecutions under *LEX MAJESTATIS*, Suetonius says of a person, whom he does not name, that he was condemned by the senate for taking the head from a statue of Augustus, and placing another in its room. The party in this case being found guilty, the most trivial acts were brought under the wide range of this odious law: as, for instance, it became capital for a man to beat his slave, or change his clothes near the statue of Augustus: as if, forsooth, the majesty of the emperor was weakened or lowered by what was done near his pale, marble statue. “In fine,” we are told, “a person was condemned to death, for suffering some honors to be decreed him in the colony where he lived, on the same day on which they had formerly been decreed to Augustus.” \*

O, tyranny, how subtle is thy spirit! What a fine essence. What forms dost thou not take—what new phases assume. For what? To enslave man; to beat his manhood down to the dust; to degrade him lower than the beasts. Art thou not from hell? Doing the behests of thy imperious master, who seeks to enslave a world to lust by his cunning arts. So the devices of tyranny are endless, and so subtle and dark as to seem

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\* Life of Tiberius, sec. 58

to proceed from Satan. Tyranny! Poisonous breath! All die who come within thy deadly influence. Civil liberty, next to the knowledge of God, (and they cannot long live apart) is the most inestimable boon that can be bestowed on man.

We might enumerate many cases similar to those we have now mentioned; but it is not necessary. In our next volume, "THE TWO AGRIPPAS," (concluding our series of historical biography) we may have occasion to refer again to the operation of this law. We have said enough at present to show its nature and scope.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### TIBERIUS IN HIS SOLITARY RETREAT AT CAPREÆ.

[A. D. 32, 33.]

WHILE Rome was wrapped in mourning, and joy was banished from the city, the emperor continued his excesses in the isle of Capreæ. At the age of seventy-three his passions remained unabated; and in his service were employed those who sought far and near for "objects of desire" to gratify his unbridled appetites. It is the historian Tacitus who recounts the shameful story. The child of affectionate love, sheltered under the parental roof was not safe from the inquisitive eyes of the agents of Tiberius; like ravening wolves they roamed abroad in search of prey. They had a "full



commission to allure the venal with presents, and to conquer the reluctant by threats and violence." No rank in society was exempt; "to stain the honor of respectable families gave zest to his enjoyments." Modesty offered no protection; it rather "served as a provocative." The charm of innocence, the ingenuous blush mantling the cheek, the downcast eye, instead of serving as a safeguard against brutal lust, and a restraint on appetite, only exposed the unhappy maiden to danger; and regardless of her cries, she was hurried from home and friends, and shut up in one of the villas of the emperor. Suetonius records the case of one Mallo-nia, who because she could not be forced even to compliance with his wishes, was given up to the common informers. Anticipating her condemnation, she stabbed herself. During her trial, Tiberius was present, and frequently cried out to her, and asked her, "Do you repent?" In the open court, and as she was leaving it, she upbraided him on account of his depraved tastes, exposing his secret practices. This was alluded to in a farce, which was acted at the next public sports; and Tiberius became a common object of ridicule.\*

We are further told that "with the pride of eastern despotism, he seized the young men of ingenuous birth and forced them to yield to his sensual gratifications."\* "New modes of sensuality were invented, and new terms for scandalous refinements in lascivious pleasure."† On this island he invented, thought out (*excogitavit*)

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\* Tac. An. book 6. sec. 1.

† Ibid.

apartments for the practice of secret, scandalous vice, hence called *sellarii*. These were expressly fitted up for the purpose, and set round with pictures and statues to inflame the lowest, meanest, most debasing passions; to lower man, so exalted by reason—so crowned by his Creator with glory and honor—not merely to a level with beasts, but far below beasts. Some of these apartments were occasionally filled with water, like the amphitheatre at Rome when a *naumachia* (sea-fight) was to be exhibited as a public spectacle. In these ponds took place such things—under the eye of Tiberius—as, says Suetonius, are “not fit to be mentioned or heard, much less credited.”\* This was one of the recreations of Tiberius. There were also recesses in woods and groves—caves and hollow rocks—in which somewhat similar scenes were enacted; but not so brutal, so disgraceful to human nature, as the particular abomination referred to by Suetonius, and which calls forth his withering rebuke. A heathen writer, accustomed to the follies of the age, cannot find language sufficiently strong to denounce “the unnatural experiments of prostitution.”

In addition to such debasing pursuits, Tiberius in his solitary retreat at Capreæ, continued under Thrasyllus his favorite study of judicial astrology. In the island of Rhodes, where as we have seen, he passed eight years of his life, “he employed his leisure, in the acquisition of that science. The seeds of time were the early study of Tiberius.” The following incident which took

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\* Life of Tiberius, sec. 44.

place in Rhodes, shows how Tiberius tried the skill of Thrasyllus; the manner in which the astrologer came forth from the trial, gave the emperor ever after the greatest confidence in his abilities. While so many of the intimate friends of Tiberius fell under the hands of the executioner, the astrologer was safe.

The incident referred to was as follows: it is thus related by Tacitus.

When on Rhodes Tiberius chose to consult an astrologer, he retired with him to the top of the house, attended by a single freedman, selected for the purpose, illiterate, but of great bodily strength. This man conducted the soothsayers whose talents were to be tried, along the ridge of the cliff on which the mansion stood; and as he returned, if the emperor suspected fraud, or vain affectation of knowledge, he threw the impostor headlong into the sea. Tiberius was by these means left at ease, and no witness survived to tell the story. Thrasyllus was put to the same test. Being led along the precipice he answered a number of questions; and not only promised imperial splendor to Tiberius, but opened a scene of future events in a manner that filled his imagination with astonishment. Tiberius desired to know "Whether he had cast his own nativity? Could he foresee what was to happen in the course of the year? nay, on that very day?"

Thrasyllus consulted the position of the heavens, and the aspect of the planets: he was struck with fear; he paused; hesitated; he sunk into profound meditation; terror and amazement shook his frame. Breaking silence at last, "I perceive," he said, "the crisis of my

fate; this very moment may be my last." Tiberius clasped him in his arms, congratulating him both on his knowledge and his escape from danger.\*

On the island of Capreæ Tiberius gave a specimen, in the case of Servius Galba, of his own knowledge of the future. This was A. D. 33. From the top of his villa on the east end of the island, built on that high prominence, under that serene sky, whose azure vault was reflected from the depths of the glassy wave below, Tiberius "consulted the position of the heavens, and the aspect of the planets." He studied the nativity of individuals; the time, place, and manner of their birth; and among the rest that of Servius Galba. Galba was one of the consuls for the present year. He was not in any way allied to the family of the Cæsars, but of very noble extraction, being descended from a great and ancient family. He always used to put among his other titles upon the bases of his statues, his being great-grandson to Q. Catulus Capitolinus. He was emperor after Nero, in whom the Cæsars became extinct.\* Tiberius did not love this man very much. His mother Livia, widow of the emperor Augustus, left Galba a legacy of fifty millions sesterces. But because the sum was expressed in figures, and not in words at length, Tiberius reduced it to five hundred thousand; and this he did not receive until paid by Caligula.

Once during the year of his consulship, Galba, being on a visit to the emperor—perhaps having come to consult him in his official capacity, or else paying him a

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\* Tac. An. book vii sec. Suet. Life of Galba sec. 23.



visit of form. Tiberius called him to an audience. In order to penetrate his inmost thoughts he tried him on various topics, and at length told him in Greek, "You too, Galba, at a future day, will have a taste of sovereign power," alluding to his elevation late in life, and the shortness of his reign.\*

He perished by the hands of assassins, in the seventy-third year of his age, and the ninth month of his reign.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives an account of the manner in which Tiberius determined who should be his successor, whether Caligula, the son of Germanicus, or Tiberius, the son of Drusus. He bade Erodes, his freedman, to bring the children to him the next day in the morning, determining in his own mind that the government should be left to him who should come to him first. Accordingly, at the appointed time, he bade Erodes call in that child that should be there ready. Erodes did so, and found Caius (Caligula) before the door. For Tiberius, his son's son, was not yet come, but staid waiting for his breakfast.

The appearance of Caius was a great shock to the emperor, who wished to leave the Roman empire to his own grandson. Nevertheless, regarding his own purposes as overruled by fate, he did not alter his resolution, but fixed the succession of Caligula, son of Germanicus. even though, according to Josephus, by his knowledge of the art of divination, he foresaw the sad end of Tibe-

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\* Tac. An. book vi. sec. 20. Suet. Life of Galba sec. 23.

rius, his own grandson by the hands of Caligula. \* Tacitus records the same thing: we repeat the saying though we have mentioned it before, that the accord on this point between the Jewish and Roman historian may be seen. A little while before the death of the emperor, "while with tears of affection he clasped in his arms the youngest of his grandsons, he observed the stern countenance of Caligula, and calmly told him, "You will kill this boy, and fall yourself by some other hand.' " †

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\* Jos. An. book vi. sec. 46.

† Jos. Antiq. book xviii., ch. 6. sec. 8. 9.

## Book Eleventh.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### HEROD ANTIPAS HEARS OF JESUS. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

[A. D. 22, 33.]

IN his palace at Sepphoris was Herod at rest. Few lovelier prospects could be presented to the eye than the rich and smiling plain of Zebulon. On an insulated hill overlooking this plain, on the southern line, as we have described, stood Sepphoris, the chief city of Galilee. Its walls, its citadel, its high tower, were seen from afar; it was a strong city. Herodias had gratified her revenge, and was content. No guilty fears, no remorseful recollections disturbed her bosom. But Herod Antipas, was he at rest? As he wandered through the gorgeous palace, or sat down in some arbor of the palace garden, or from some high balcony looked out on the lovely plain, or on the sea in the distance, was he not more or less disturbed, his conscience corroded by the recollection of his guilt in consenting to the death of a man whom he knew to be noble and just. By a weak compliance with the wishes of a bad

woman, (how many a guilty deed has been committed through such malign influence) inspired by fierce revenge, he had put to death John, the forerunner of the Jewish Messiah. On his birthday, while he held high festival in the castle of Machærus, he passed his oath in a jovial hour to the daughter of Herodias, who danced to please him, that she should have whatsoever gift she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. In an evil hour he made an oath to this effect. Instructed by her mother, the daughter—we may hope reluctantly—asked the head of John the Baptist. The executioner soon performed his office, and the head with its gory locks, was brought to the damsel on a large silver dish. Thus was closed the career of the prophet of the Highest, the announcement of whose birth was made by an angel from heaven, in the solitude of the temple, and at the hour of the evening sacrifice. His death came in a moment; it did but transfer his soul to the paradise of God when it was fully ripe for glory.

On the wings of every wind was borne the name of a new prophet, whose marvellous deeds were now the theme of every tongue. The whole land rang with the sound; from every direction tidings of what was transpiring came to Sepphoris. Jesus had not visited this city; he kept aloof from it, and its tetrarch. But the traveller, the merchant, whoever visited the city for business or pleasure, recounted the wondrous story. Herod, by no means at rest in his mind before—as if like Saul he had seen a ghost, a spirit clothed as if in human garb, from another world—is filled with fear, and imagines the new prophet, whose fame filled the



land, to be none other than John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded. John had performed no miracles; but being now raised from the dead, he is clothed with new power: "Therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." There is no denial of the works that were done; they were too evident; and were corroborated by universal testimony. Unable to conceive of any other cause, and greatly alarmed, haunted by guilty fears, he ascribes them to John the Baptist, whom God by his mighty power has raised from the dead. This is the source of his power; he is risen from the dead. What a testimony is this to the fact, that, in the belief of Herod Antipas, John was a true prophet of the Most High. Who but God can raise the dead? can rekindle in our ashes the living spark? What art has man to do this? Beside this, Herod Antipas by this concession, gives his testimony to the great Jewish doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the doctrine which lies at the foundation of the Old Testament. It is not with this Jewish ruler a matter of speculation; he is fully informed of that doctrine, and gives it his unhesitating assent. He takes the doctrine for granted. He adds to it by supposing that, rising from the grave, a man is invested with a power like that of God Almighty.

There occurred about this time, as was then believed, (though treated as fabulous) the extraordinary phenomena of a new-risen phœnix. "This bird," says Tacitus, 'after disappearing for a series of ages, revisited Egypt.' These birds were seen at long intervals; the first appeared in the reign of Sesostris; the second in

that of Amasis ; the third when Ptolemy, of the Macedonian race, was seated on the throne of Egypt. This phoenix, it is said, directed its flight toward Heliopolis, (the bird is sacred to the sun) attended by a group of various birds, all attracted by the novelty, and gazing with wonder at so beautiful an appearance. Tacitus does not vouch for these accounts. From Ptolemy to Tiberius but two hundred and fifty years had elapsed, when the bird appeared again in Egypt ; whereas the common persuasion was that it lived five hundred years. From the old bird sprang the new ; from the principles of life deposited by the father in its native clime of Arabia, just before its death. From the deposit arises a new progeny ; and away the young bird flies through a long tract of air, rejoicing in his new and not ephemeral existence. \*

This bird had been regarded " as a prognostic of the resurrection, because it revived out of its own ashes." Whether its periodical appearance in Egypt be true or not, (both Tacitus and Pliny, the naturalist, believed in this) the reported appearance of the bird in the reign of Tiberius, at the time that Christ abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, is a pleasing coincidence, and is deemed worthy of mention in the present connection.

The resurrection of the body ! how beautiful the idea—how sweet the thought ! The phoenix, arising out of the ashes of its sire, does but faintly symbolize the resurrection of the material body, now made spiritual

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\* Tac An. book vi. sec. 28.

and incorruptible. Sprung originally from the dust, it is now refined and spiritualized by God—its earthly particles having undergone a radical change; (though it is impossible to tell what that change is) and it will die no more. Corruption will put on incorruption; and what is sown in weakness will be raised in almighty strength. Countless ages will be but the beginning of life, even for the body; life ever beginning and never ending.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE ROSE OF SHARON.

“And after the fire a still small voice.” 1 Kings xix. 12.

THE two-fold character in which Christ appeared in our world, not only as David's Son, but also as David's Lord, (God over all, blessed forevermore) has not been sufficiently considered. The picture must be viewed on both sides. As the Son of David, agreeably to the saying of the angel to Mary, the mother of Jesus, he would ascend the throne of his father David; and reign over the house of Jacob forever: while of his kingdom there should be no end. This is one side of the picture. As David's Lord he was to reign in the hearts of the children of men. This is the other side of the picture. The two views should not be separated, otherwise confusion will arise; and like the two knights we will be

ready to fight, when in reality both contestants are right. One side of the shield is indeed silver; the other is gold.

The purport of this chapter refers to the divine kingdom; that which is established in the human heart. But the one is inseparable from the other. That which is established in the heart, prepares the individual to be a good subject of the temporal kingdom of the Son of David. Hence these words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He that is born again, is born from above; that is, of David's Lord. He receives a new nature; he becomes a new creature. Born from above, of God, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and is thus prepared to give in his adhesion to the Son of David, sitting on the throne of his father David. This is the order. First, born of David's Lord, and then enrolled as a good subject and soldier of the kingdom of the Son of David on earth, whose capital city will be Jerusalem, as it was in the days of old: according to this Scripture: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." \* All prophecy tends to the exaltation of Jerusalem, and of God's ancient people. The Jerusalem from above must not supersede the Jerusalem below. This earth will be the grand theatre in which God will yet perform his greatest wonders; will exhibit spectacles both of mercy and judgment. While

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\* Isaiah xxiv. 26.



with the one hand he overturns the kingdoms of this world, with the other, amid confusion, darkness, and terror, he will establish on their ruins his own kingdom, that of the Messiah. This will be, according to the word of prophecy, the day of days.

To gain subjects for his earthly kingdom,—both from among the living and the dead,—to beautify the earth with righteousness, Jesus has appeared on earth as the “Rose of Sharon;” as the one “altogether lovely;” as the “chiefest among ten thousand:” full of beauty, adorned with every earthly grace. Without a compeer among the children of men for personal loveliness; for every charm that can win and attach, in untiring constancy and sweet rapture, the human heart. The soul, wedded to one so fair, will rove no more; the divine and the human are so blended in Christ as completely and forever to satisfy the soul with goodness. It is the lustre of heaven that draws; it is the beauty of Jesus that attracts. Divine love possesses man; he is filled with all the fulness of God. He explores a field whose riches are unsearchable.

There can be no doubt that Jesus appeared on earth, among men, with a beauty never equalled. And little as we are apt to think of it, there will be that in his personal appearance in the world to come, when he shall sit on the throne of his glory, on which we can gaze without tiring forever. Beside, new beauties will be constantly disclosed; and the enchantment will never be dissolved. When the vail is lifted a little, and here in the flesh we have some view of the face of Jesus, (made to the mind by the Holy Spirit) nothing

can exceed the pure delight, the holy rapture. The mind had never before any conception of such loveliness, such ravishing beauty. It is transported with the sight. Thus God, seen in the face of Jesus Christ, will administer to our sense of the beautiful as nothing else could do; and we shall find from this source a charm before which the highest creations of art will fade away.

Here is an element of beauty, a source of happiness, which, as one of the ingredients of the kingdom of God on earth, has not perhaps sufficiently entered into our calculations. Think of one so fair mingling among men; as it were the face of an angel presented to view, on which men indiscriminately were called to look. Think of the ever-varying expression of the face; the glance of the eye; the step; the voice, sweeter than music; the charm of the manner, the gracefulness of the action.

Then what words he spoke; what truths he uttered. He drew aside the vail that hides the glories of the invisible world, and men saw into eternity; and death retired; and "beauty immortal awoke from the tomb." It was the victor over the tomb who was so fair, so beautiful; and from this might be presaged what stores of beauty are laid away, kept in reserve for the enjoyment of man in his new terrestrial paradise. O God, thou art so good to man! His choicest blessing are yet to come. The darkness of time will retire, and the day of eternity dawn, and this earth be enrobed in gladness and beauty. The last sigh will expire, borne away on the passing wind; and the bosom will heave with sorrow

no more; not another tear will wet the cheek. Above all there will be nothing to fear any more.

Jesus engages the hearts of his loyal subjects. Ravished by his beauty, they are ravished also by the riches of his love.

The love of Jesus. Ah! what shall we say? Will not that win hearts? Does it not, even now, to this day, win hearts? Earthly love! Some are afraid of it. They need not be; only let it be pure, and seek the good of the object that is loved. What are we made for, but to love, and to be loved? Love is the bond of perfectness. You that wage such war against Jesus and his gospel,—and, if you could, would say that no such person as Jesus the Christ ever existed,—that he is a cheat, and his life a forgery,—what, I pray you, have you to say to this love, bounded only by the limits of humanity, which flows from his heart to yours, and mine? A love so entirely pure and unselfish; and which, if it were universal, (as it is destined to be) would turn this earth into heaven? Is this the fruit of deception? of a cheat? of a sham? of a lie? Yes! so does the sun not shine nor warm.

O, ineffable beauty and love! thou stoapest to man, to win him back to thine embrace. The heavens bend, and form an arch hung with azure drapery, to let the Son of Man pass through on his errand of mercy and love. He comes, clothed with more than mortal grace; his charms are matchless; his face is radiant with beauty; his bosom heaves with love; his heart burns with holy fire, with inextinguishable desire to fill the world with the lustre of his throne, and to inaugurate



over all the earth the reign of peace. Thou dost not come, O Prince of Peace, armed like high Jove, with an avenging thunderbolt, or in the guise of a warrior, with fury-inflamed face, or with thy garments reeking in blood; but in spotless white vesture, with a shepherd's crook in thy hand, and with a voice low and sweet, soft and tender, like sound of distant melody stealing over the waters on a summer evening, as daylight fades away, and the evening stars one by one appear, till as a glittering host they are marshalled o'er the sky. "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." O God! is not the earth dazzled with thy beauty? charmed with thy more than siren voice? melted with thy love? The fragrance of thy love is as the fragrance of the rose; but its perfume is wafted over the wide desert, and only now and then a solitary traveller making his weary way along, inhales the odor of the flower, and is refreshed thereby, more than with a thousand essences. Uncreated beauty! Hast thou smiled upon man in vain? Love divine! Canst thou not win hearts to bow to thy mild sceptre?

Primeval beauty! What rival hath stepped between thee and the soul that once adored, and knew and desired no other charm but thine. What new face, what meretricious charm has won the once ardent lover from his peerless mistress? What throne has been set up that outdazzles that of the Creator, and draws away hearts from his dominion? As a star wanders from its orbit, and leaves a lurid train behind, so man, wandering from God, roams restless o'er the earth, enamored of some image of ideal beauty, which his wanton fancy



has set up, and which as often escapes as he vainly seeks to grasp in his fond embrace. Once and again he thinks he has found the substance, but it always proves to be a shadow. It is a phantom disappearing in the cold mists of morning ; however gay and brilliant, and decked with many-colored plumage it appeared in the glitter of evening, and amid the thousand lights that shone upon the festive scene,—the lights went out, the phantom vanished ; and the heart was as desolate and empty, as chill and dark as before.

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### CHAPTER III.

THE ROCK ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT : ON WHICH  
CHRIST'S TEMPORAL THRONE AND DOMINION STAND.

THERE are writers who, as if they had a pique at Christ, and measuring him by themselves, go out of their way to show that he was governed by a love of applause, and a desire of notoriety, because he questioned his disciples concerning the opinions that were formed of him by those without. They conceive of Jesus as gathering the twelve in a group around him, himself the centre of the group, and questioning them concerning what was said by others in regard to his person and ministry, from the one motive of self-love, and to minister to his love of approbation. They do not take into account—being carried away by per-

sonal pique and prejudice—the purport of this questioning, which was neither more nor less than to test their own faith in him; whether or not they believed him to be really and truly the Christ. This is clear from the question he puts directly to them: “But whom do ye say that I am?” This led to the acknowledgment of Peter, (Peter speaking for the rest) that he was really and truly the Christ. Then came the declaration of Christ, that on this testimony of Peter, this, “the word of his testimony,” the belief and acknowledgment that Jesus was the Messiah, he would establish his church, and build up his temporal throne and earthly dominion.

The testimony of Peter was this, “We believe and are sure thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is the Rock, rising from ocean’s unfathomable depths, on which the church of the living God is built; and the rock also on which the future Jewish empire is to be established. The waves of the Red Sea must part, and Israel acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord, their Messiah, and then the nation will rise to empire, as easily as of old they walked dry shod through the depths of the sea. Then will be witnessed a far greater deliverance than that from Egypt. This acknowledgment that Jesus is the Messiah, will be the SIGN, the signal for the assembling of the outcasts of Israel, and gathering together the dispersed of Israel from the far corners of the earth.\* Moses had but a rod in his hand, which was the signal or sign of the coming de-

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\* Isaiah xi. 12.

liverance ; and by the virtue which God imparted to this rod, and the power accompanying its use, agreeably to the command of God, he was enabled to perform such wonders in behalf of his people. What an insignificant instrument ! What a feeble rod ! What a dry stick ! Yet were ever such wonders performed before by human agency ? Surely not. No wonder men want to shut out the supernatural from the Mosaic history, and to resolve it all into the myths of Greek or Roman story, or the feats of knight-errantry. Was all this done by a dry stick ? What then becomes of the deeds of men—of their most vaunted works. What a stain is thus cast on human glory, and how is the pride of man brought down. The oak, in his strength and grandeur is laid low, and man shown his littleness, and the emptiness of all his vain boasts. What did this rod in the hands of Moses, this insignificant, dry stick prefigure ? Neither more nor less than this, “The Testimony of Jesus ;” that is, the explicit avowal that Jesus is the Christ. What the rod was to Moses, the testimony of Jesus is to us, and to all that believe on his name. Israel will find this to be so in the day that it acknowledges Jesus to be the Messiah. This is the talismanic word, before which the gates fly open, and Israel marches forth as of old in the wilderness, according to the number of her tribes, to take possession of the promised land. Why has this land been kept so long vacant, unless it be to receive to her warm embrace the remnant of Israel, those living in our day, but now dispersed over all the earth. The faith that animated Joseph in his day animates this people now. The land

is theirs, and they are even now in the possession of it by faith. But the Jew of this day must have the faith of his ancestors; and then, at the name of "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph," on the wings of the wind they will be borne back to the land of their fathers.

Are the means inadequate to the end? The acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ,—is "the Son of God,"—is precisely the same in effect as the rod. Moses understood this well; he wrote of Christ. All he did was done in that name. He did not look at the means so much, as at the appointment and ordinance of God. What is the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," but the testimony of Jesus—the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Messiah? It is this stone which is to become a great mountain, and to fill the whole earth. The Rock, then, on which the future kingdom of the Jews—that is, of the Messiah—is to be built, is the testimony of Jesus; the belief and acknowledgment that Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah, the long looked for King of Israel.

The church of God, everywhere the same, common to all ages and to all nations, is built on the same Rock. Faith in Christ; this is the rock on which each believer stands; and the greatest thing we can learn or know is this. To him give all the prophets witness; and to know Jesus as the Christ with an unwavering faith, is to know the purport and substance of all that the holy prophets have written. All other knowledge is little and vain beside this. When you fully stand on this rock, when you can truly, from a knowledge of Scripture testimony, say with Peter, "We believe and are



SURE thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," then we stand on a foundation against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

The reader must not think we attach too much importance to this point. What else but this did Jesus essay to teach to his disciples during all the time that he continued with them, both before and after his resurrection? What was the object of all his teaching; of the close intimacy that subsisted between him and them; of their admittance to a nearer insight into his works than others, and displays of his glory—as for instance, that on the Mount of transfiguration—but to teach them, what they most needed to learn, in view of their mission to plant the Christian church,—faith in him as the Son of God—as the promised Jewish Messiah. As the builders of that church, it was necessary that they should know on what foundation it rested; what was the Rock on which it was to be immovably built. To do this, whence did he draw his proof? Did he dig down into the bowels of the earth? Did he seek the testimony of rocks? Did he decipher ancient inscriptions? Did he consult the antiquities of Egypt and other lands. Did he deduce labored inferences from science, analogy, and history? Did he feel his way in the dark, amid dubious materials, and as if he were following a scientific investigation? Far from this. He took the simplest method possible. His disciples were men of plain common sense; and it was in their power to weigh the evidence the Scriptures furnished, without any great degree of mental effort, and to satisfy themselves from the works and teaching of

Jesus, and their knowledge of him in private, whether or not he answered the description given of him in the law, the Psalms and the prophets. Here was evidence which came home to their hearts and business, and which they could understand. Once satisfied that Jesus was the Messiah—that he had descended from Heaven to earth—that he had power on earth to forgive sins—that the government of the world itself was upon his shoulders—that he was the source of life—that nothing existed save at his word—and that for his pleasure all things were created,—and they had the secret key of all divine knowledge in their hands. They knew what was most essential to be known, both of life and godliness, and could wait for the solution of what was less generally known, or what was so dark and abstruse that an attempt to explain did but perplex, if it did not lead the inquirer astray from the simple pathway of truth.

If the sacred Scriptures do not in themselves contain whatever is essential to salvation, if plain, unlettered men, seeking the wisdom that is from above, cannot tell what they mean, then Jesus was much at fault, and his disciples also. But they do contain all knowledge essential to salvation; they do not mislead; and their sublime morality is proof of this. They make a man like God; they make men what Jesus said, when quoting from the Psalms, “I said ye are gods;” truly godlike; above any mean, dishonorable action; open as the day; true as steel; upright in the sense of not even conceiving anything that was deceitful, much less descending to a low act from the expectation of gain,—

making him in fact, in the highest and noblest sense, an HONEST MAN.

Batter the outworks of Christianity as you please, but while you receive the sum and essence of the sacred Word, to wit, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,—the citadel is safe. The testimony of Jesus is the Rock on which the one, indivisible, universal church securely and forever rests.

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## CHAPTER IV.

EARTH THE GRAND THEATRE IN WHICH GOD DESIGNS TO PERFORM HIS GREATEST WORKS : TO EXHIBIT HIS MOST SPLENDID SPECTACLES, IN CONNECTION WITH THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD.

THE stars do not shine as they did ; the heavens are not as pellucid as they once were ; the winds do not blow as softly as they did ; the air is not so pure as it once was ; the sea is not as clear as in the time before the flood ; neither does the sun shine with the same peerless majesty as when he first set out on his untrodden course. A chill has fallen on all things ; a dark cloud. The elements are in commotion ; the earth is moved ; and everything is heaved up, as if by an earthquake. Nothing is at rest ; a pall is drawn over the sky ; and sounds of wailing are heard, as in northern regions, when all is darkness and desolation, and

dismal moans, as of imprisoned winds or ice-bound ocean, break upon the ear, and fill the mind with strange forebodings. The native in his hut, clad in skins, warmed by his lamp, hears the sad, distant sound, and thinks, mayhap, that evil spirits are careering on the air, and continues to crouch in his hut, not venturing forth with his spear to battle with the elements, and gain food necessary for his existence. So earth is all sad and dreary to what it was of yore, and man's ear is filled with dismal sounds and portents drear

It is strange that interpreters of the Bible ignore this earth as they do, as if it had not been made especially for man, and was not designed for his proper habitation. For what else was it made, if not for man, and for such creatures as God designed for the use of man, and upon whom he put the dread of man, as their sovereign and master. And because a blight and chill, through transgression, has fallen on this once fair and cloudless earth, shall we give it up to bats and owls, as those cities of old, whose ruins tell their former greatness and magnificence. A time will come when even those ancient cities shall be rebuilt and reinhabited,—and shall not the earth be rebuilt, and ascend its high pedestal, and merit and receive the appellation of “very good,” from the mouth of its Creator once more. It is on earth so many tragic scenes have been displayed; it has been on earth God has poured so many vials of his wrath; sword, fire, famine and pestilence (these four scourges in the hand of God as the scourge in the hand of Jesus in the temple) have laid waste and desolated the earth, and yet has not God said, “There shall



be no more curse? To what sphere does this refer, if not to this earth? It surely does not refer to heaven, that seat or place where God is, and into which sin and sorrow have not entered. No. It is to this earth—and this alone—that the promise refers, “and there shall be no more curse.”

While all heaven above—the glorious beings there—are looking with intense interest to this earth, as the scene where God will chiefly manifest his power and faithfulness, man is looking away from this earth, to some unknown untried state, for his future habitation. What does the Word say on this point? It says this :

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*” \*

Cast your eye back, and what do you see? You see the old world destroyed by water; Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire; the nations of Canaan rooted out for their idolatry and abominable licentiousness; the cities of Nineveh and Babylon made a den of dragons and serpents, lying all still and waste, marked by little else but mounds of earth, which the winds of the desert drive to and fro across the sandy plain. This is what you see in the history of the past. And as for nations, the greatest nations of antiquity,—they rise and fall, involving ruin upon untold myriads of the human race

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\* Rev. v. 9, 10.

in their disastrous overthrow. Like the ghosts of Banquo, they follow, these nations, in sad procession, each one telling the same tale, and casting a pall over the stage across which they pass. This is the picture of the past,—what is that of the future?

It is big with scenes of tremendous magnitude, but this earth is the place where they are to be acted. God has partly drawn the vail aside, and has shown us the impending future, as of a picture draped in black on one side, and on the other festooned with flowers, and gay in dancing sunlight. Over the mythology of the ancients no light from the dark, impervious future was shed; but in Jewish story the future was opened by their prophets. The fate of nations is predicted; not in vague, indefinite terms, but in the most exact language, the same as if it were already accomplished; and this too at a time when these nations were flourishing in the highest degree. So too of cities; such cities as Tyre, Sidon, Nineveh, and Babylon. The traveller who visits them now, finds, after the lapse of so many hundred years, that the painting has been drawn with colors none too sad and drear. The historic-prophetic picture tells its own tale to the traveller, as he sits down by the waters, on some fallen column, and surveys the ruins of Tyre; or, amid intolerable heat, rides over the wide, sandy plain, seeking almost in vain for the remains of walls that once towered in the sky; of a tower whose building marked the interposition of providence; the confusion of tongues; and the dispersion of peoples. Babylon how low hast thou fallen! And was not thy end predicted? Step by step, through

revolving centuries, slowly but surely the word of God has been literally accomplished. This cannot be denied. So exact is the accomplishment, that by a comparison with the prediction, it carries with it its own evidence. And so long did it take to accomplish the final result, that you cannot go back, and say, the prediction followed the event. The whole is too ancient ; and the words of the prophets were written, as all evidence fully shows, long before Babylon was reduced to its present condition. An omniscient eye foresaw, and to man was it given, in the height of the glory of the city, and the fulness of its prosperity, to describe its present mournful state, in the midst of the most desolate of plains, though the Euphrates still flows through the arid, silent region. All waste, silence, and desolation ; and the willow and the palm tree, under which Judea captive sat with untuned harp, and the songs of Zion silent on her lips, shade the flowing waters or the burning plain no more.

But in the far future some second Babylon is to arise ; the greatest city the world ever yet saw. We do not know certainly whether its foundations are laid ; though this may be. Like the city of Rome in its infancy, it may even now have started on its career of greatness. It has been forenamed Babylon, though this name is typical, or symbolical, rather than real and actual. The name is descriptive, and shows the resemblance that will exist between it and its golden type. But what gloom gathers around the ill-fated city when its end shall come. Its fall will be the fall of the greatest city the world ever saw ; and will bring along

in its train the greatest revolution the earth has known. The earth is yet to witness the spectacle of this burning city, and the judgment of the cities that have been seduced by its example, and burned incense at its unholy shrine.

It will not do to ignore this city. The description is too real. It is all stated as a plain matter of fact;\* and its overthrow will bring in an entire new state or condition of our world. Whatever is obscure at present in relation to this "great city," (yet to come) will then be made plain; but the fact of such a city, and its overthrow—its burning—can hardly be made plainer than it is. What will immediately follow this event will be the judgment of Satan; whatever this may include. This will usher in the millennium in all its glory, and the first resurrection of the dead.

On this earth, as on a stage, are these scenes to be enacted; it is the theatre in which they will be displayed.

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\* The reader is referred to Revelations, from chapter xii. to xix. inclusive, where rises to view the greatest empire of ancient or modern times.



## Book Twelfth.

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### INVOCATION.

HOLY Spirit! assist to write of scenes on which the regeneration of this earth is built. Thou didst inspire holy men of old to write of these things—to foretell them in dark and measured numbers, long before they came to pass. Moses and Elijah saw from afar, and foretold what Christ should suffer; and on the Mount of Transfiguration they talked of this to him a little before his death. What pen can speak rightly of this without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Without this it seems absurd, unworthy of the great Creator,—yea, even a fable,—even as the sacrifice of his son by Abraham. According to human wisdom how preposterous does it appear! If reason steps in, it asks would God make such a requisition as this? We know God did make it; and foreshadowed a far greater offering. The illumination of the darkness is faith; and we must bow our heads acquiescently to the Divine mandate. There are heights in God's ways to man which reason cannot ascend; there are mysteries which it cannot

penetrate. We come to tread on this ground, and to speak of the death of Christ. Our heart trembles; we fear to venture. O, God assist! O, Holy Spirit, inspire!

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SUFFERING OF DEATH FORETOLD.

THERE are some writers, and reviewers too,\* so wise in their own conceit, and such defenders of Christianity, as to see in Jeremiah or Israel their own fate or end. What is usually ascribed to Christ,—the prediction of what Jesus suffered,—they are pleased to refer either to the one or the other, or to both. Wise men! What an element do they take out of the history of Christ. What stands out in all his history with greater prominence, with more marked significance, both before and after his resurrection, than his reference to his death? With what particularity did he describe what he should suffer from those into whose power he should be delivered; all the shameful treatment and outrage, even to the smallest details. And from whence does he draw these particulars? Even from the Bible.\* Jesus does but repeat what had been

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\* See "Bunsen's Biblical Researches," reviewed in "Essays and Reviews."

previously written, he is his own commentator upon these inspired passages.

Then, to run ahead a little, what must we think of Philip as a commentator upon Isaiah, when he explains to the Ethiopian eunuch the meaning of the passage, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb dumb before his shearers, so he opened not his mouth." \* Did Philip preach to the eunuch from this passage Jeremiah or Jesus? Or, did he refer the passage, in its primary sense, to Jeremiah? and then, by way of accommodation, so that he might not be left out altogether, to Jesus? What foolery is this! These men, if they can but stab Jesus, and wound him in the house of his friends, pay little attention to common sense.

It is worthy of remark, according to the record of Mark, that as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, for the last time, in company with his disciples, he introduced the subject of his death, under circumstances of peculiar solemnity.

Jesus was in advance of the rest. He was walking alone; and something in his appearance filled them with amazement and fear. What was this something? Did it prefigure his death? Was it some lustrous emanation from his body? a shining forth of the divinity within? Did the sun suffer a partial eclipse, its splendor paling before a radiance greater than its own? † There was a most unusual appearance; the language

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\* Compare Acts viii. 32. with Isaiah liii. 7, 8.

† See Mark x. 2.

clearly supports this. Immediately after this striking emanation he enters upon the subject of his last sufferings and death, and the manner in which he should be treated by the chief priests and scribes; and how he should be condemned to death, and delivered into the hands of the Romans, who had the power of life and death. This emblem of sovereignty had for over twenty years been taken from the Jews.

When with sacrilegious hands would-be critics of God's holy Word attempt to set aside the death of Christ, or at least give it no higher character than that of Socrates, we may apply to them without stint the words of Christ to Peter, who, wholly unable to apprehend this point in the teaching of his Master, discarded it as wholly inapplicable to Christ, and at variance with the establishment of his kingdom in our world. Stern was the rebuke which Peter received; and he was told that what he said, "savored not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."\* So of these critics, however profound their learning, or deep their philosophy, their critical investigations "savor not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

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\* Matt. 16. 23.



## CHAPTER II.

WHAT LIES BACK OF OR BEHIND THE PICTURE OF THE  
CROSS.

IN a painting, what is not in the front, or foreground, is apt, by the superficial observer, to be but little noticed; when perhaps the effect of the figures in front, or whatever the pencil has sketched, is owing to the coloring that looms up from the background—the dark shading that appears on the canvass. In the picture of the cross, all is dark and obscure in the background; there is no intermingling of shades—of *chiaroscuro*—the blending of light and of shade in the painting. All is dark; yet the figure on the cross, the light that shines from the mangled, discolored body of Christ, shines into the darkness; and the one, carefully observed, relieves the palpable darkness of the other.

There is a mighty conflict going on between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. We see this more or less clearly brought out in heathen mythology. And in that system of religion, once prevalent in the most enlightened parts of our world, the powers of darkness were propitiated—the infernal gods, as well as those who were thought to be more beneficent in their rule, and worthy of man's highest praise. The fact of the great contest between evil and good—light and darkness—is sufficiently indicated in their religious

rites, and in the worship of Proserpina or Hecate. Proserpina, wife of Pluto, and queen of hell, was to them what death is to us, or rather, perhaps, she personified death. Death is with us the sharp and glittering spear which Satan brandishes over our heads; it is the sign of the sceptre and sovereignty of Satan. It is the executioner who follows in the train of this malignant evil spirit, and is the willing servant to do the behests of the great enemy of God and man. The question arises, "How can death be reached?" The answer is, through Satan, his master.

Now behind the cross is the black cloud of sin and evil; and wrapped up in interminable folds in that same cloud, is Satan—Satan figures in the scene. Where is the spear of Ithuriel, by which he may be pierced? This crooked serpent, assuming every form, resorting to every device to maintain his ascendancy, how shall he be taken and bound, so as to deceive the nations no more? "The third part of the stars of heaven"\* has he drawn in his trail; he assumes to govern the kingdoms of the earth.

There is but one way by which Satan, sin, and death (these three are but one) can receive their fatal wound, and that is through the cross; and when we see Jesus expiring on the cross, then we know that Satan, though stronger than leviathan, has received a wound,—a thrust from Ithuriel's spear—from which he will never recover. He may struggle for a long while, and make vast efforts to escape from the barbed weapon—but all

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\* Rev. xii. 4.

his efforts will prove futile, and the victory of the cross will be complete.

The whole of the Bible, from the beginning to the end, is built upon a contest going on between God and Satan; and when Jesus steps upon the stage, what is his design but to bind Satan, and shut him up in "the bottomless pit," "that he should deceive the nations no more?"\* He who deceived Eve by his subtlety, has since deceived the whole world; and it requires but little effort of reason to perceive that what men so greedily pursue, riches, fame, power, pleasure, are by no means worthy of the pains bestowed; neither does their possession ever give the high degree of satisfaction which it was supposed that they would. Satan is that subtle spirit, who by his transformations deceives men; and lures them to the pursuit of imaginary good, in place of that which is real and enduring. He has had nearly the whole stage to himself; and one great means of his success has been the possession of earthly kingdoms, which he claims for his own; a claim which even Jesus did not dispute. Earthly rewards—the indulgence of our appetites—the gratification of our desires—Satan proposes to all of us in some form or other, if we will but "fall down and worship him." Thus he spoke to Christ; thus he speaks to all his deluded votaries; and his success has been great. "The whole world lieth in the arms of the wicked one." Whatever some may fondly say to the contrary, this is, on the whole, literally true; and should there be no

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\* Revelations xx. 3.

marked change for the better, on the face of our world, we may pronounce Christianity—the Bible—to be a failure.

But Jesus has come into our world to judge Satan. “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”\* Satan was to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman: (that is Christ) but the seed of the woman was to bruise his (Satan’s) head.†

The issue of this contest, so long pending, is yet to be seen; and the victory of Christ is to be made apparent to all eyes. With the overthrow of Satan, death, his right arm, his prime minister, will be destroyed also; and with him wickedness shall come to a complete end, at least for a time, in this our world, and our Saviour’s prayer be fulfilled: “Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven.” Who does not respond to this prayer, and say, amen. This happy period, which this earth is yet to see, is called in Scripture phrase, “The Millennium,” and was long since anticipated in heathen song under the name and age of the reign of Saturn—the golden age of the world. Heathen oracles have caught some rays of light from a truer inspiration; but they place the happy era of our world in the past, which really and truly belongs to the future.

Behind the cross—under and around it—there is another contest going on, invisible to mortal eyes, but none the less real. It is between God and Satan. Satan has had his “hour” and “power of darkness;”

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† John xii. 31.

\* Gen. iii. 15.



but the cross is to decide the victory eternally for God.

The cross of Jesus shall in the future be to his followers the emblem of triumph, as it has been in the past the emblem of humiliation.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CROSS.

It is a little remarkable that in immediate juxtaposition with the passage; "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out," we find this passage: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."\* The evangelist adds to this, these words by way of explanation: "This he said, signifying what death he should die."† By "being lifted up from the earth," he meant dying on the cross; and "drawing all men unto him," signified the victory of Christ over Satan; and the consequent disenthralment of man from his slavish chains. His power to deceive would be gone, and men would see in Jesus the one "altogether lovely;" and be led away by his charms from what might be called optical delusions. The heart would now be won; and this would lead to a complete surrender to Christ of all that once charmed

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\* John 12. 32.

† Ibid. v. 23.

and enthralled it. Satan's power of enchantment would be over; and especially his power over the imagination, captivating the soul through this source, by dreams of glory, or visions of bliss, through sensual indulgences, whether of the more refined or gross kind. The imagination is that faculty through which Satan exercises a greater control than perhaps any other; and when this is brought into obedience to Christ through the cross, the conquest over the whole man is comparatively easy. Hence, says Jesus, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." I will dissipate the delusions of Satan; and as I repelled the tempter at every point, so will my followers do. They will receive this power through the cross, and through faith in him who died on that cross. For these words to become true in the extended sense meant, Satan must be "judged and cast out." This event has not yet occurred; it is in the future—but perhaps not so far off as may seem. The events leading to the judgment of Satan will proceed rapidly when they once begin. The whole series of impending judgments, eventuating in that of Satan, is laid out in regular order, one following the other, and growing more severe, till the final catastrophe, "the judgment of the prince of this world."

Satan has always had this before his eye, since the first promise of the seed of the woman, in the garden, when it was said that in the seed of Abraham should the whole earth be blest with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; he knew that this portended his overthrow and dethronement. And we may also suppose that he had some knowledge of the meaning of that sig-

nificant figure, the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness, as in some way personifying his discomfiture; the end of his day of power on the earth.

Did he not also conceive that there was some strange, mysterious potency in the blood of the Lamb, shed each morning and evening on the altar of the Lord? Hence his efforts,—often too successful,—to draw the children of Israel into idolatry, and as far as possible to get them to intermit that sacred rite; to build other altars, and to worship in places not chosen or consecrated by God. This seduction was ever one of his most potent auxiliaries. A false charm was imparted to heathen altars and groves; and the nation went astray, seduced by a vain imagination. Satan was at the bottom of it all; he was the great agent or seducer,—as in the beginning, when he led Eve astray, and tempted her to pluck and to eat the forbidden fruit.

The cross is a vain symbol, and the death of Jesus Christ is in reality no more than that of Socrates, or any other good man, dying for a truth, or a friend—if Satan be disconnected from the cross. And they who attempt to weaken this or that fact in Christianity or Judaism, must go deeper than this, if they would effect their purpose. They must take Satan out of the Bible, and so root up the whole system. He lies wrapped up in his folds at the foot of the upas tree of evil; hence its deadly influence. The existence of Satan is as necessary to revelation as the existence of God; and when you sweep away the reality of the one you sweep away that of the other. Hence the singular



gloom and mystery that hangs around the cross; Satan in that dark hour gaining a temporary ascendancy, only to be smitten to the ground to rise no more.

Treading amid such mysteries, we must take words as they read, and not attempt to turn them away from their natural signification. Hence those emphatic words addressed to those who took Jesus: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." \* The devil was combined with man; hell and earth were leagued together against earth's great deliverer, in that awful hour. The "power of darkness" figures conspicuously, though shrouded from sight, in this dreadful scene. He exerts all his might; he summons all his forces. The air is filled with invisible foes; and these, as we may conjecture, near the cross, darkening the air.

And what was that strange, mysterious agony in the garden, in the dark, sad, lonely midnight hour? What did that portend? What did that mean? Had Satan no agency here? What were the ingredients mixed in that cup? Who can tell? Jesus says of himself the night before his death, and quoting from Isaiah, thereby irresistibly fixing the sense of these words: "And he was reckoned among the transgressors." † Then, in some way, as he drank that bitter cup, he tasted for the world the sins of transgressors, as he afterward tasted death, so that those who believed in

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\* Luke 12. 53.

† Isaiah liii. 12. Baron Bunsen must ignore such passages as these, when he says that they do not refer primarily and wholly to Christ, and to none other.



his name should not experience its bitterness. All the bitter dregs of sin and death Christ drank ; and Satan, who was the chief agent in the first and original transgression of man, made it, we may be sure, as bitter and dreadful as possible. It is hard to understand this. Jesus " trod the wine-press alone ; and of the people there was none with him."

Never were there such sufferings ; never was there such grief.

The wrath of God, (and by wrath here we understand the necessary displeasure of God at sin, as an infinitely holy and just God) we may affirm, was part of that cup. The wrath of God involves a sense of condemnation for sin ; and this, which every one feels for himself, as he understands the nature of God and his holy government, Jesus suffered for us all ; he was weighed down to the ground under the almost insupportable load, (O, anguish dire !) and nearly fainted in the strife. Satan was there to jeer, to afflict, to depress, to weaken ; and the more so because he knew it was the prelude to the removal of the curse from the earth ; and its release from groaning bondage.

At length, when, on the following day, at the time of the evening sacrifice, (the very hour when to his father the angel Gabriel announced the birth of his forerunner) Jesus bowed his head and died, and said, " It is finished," whatever the penalty was that the first Adam incurred, the Second Adam paid ; and amid the awe of the solemn mystery, we close.

## EPILOGUE.

IN our next volume—the third and last of the series,—we shall take up the thread from this point. In all humility, and with many tears, often sad and oppressed—knowing how the ear is closed against such homely truths as we propound,—we have written this book. We know well that unless God give the book success its fate is foresealed. Few will read; fewer still will feel what we have written. We have trodden this path too long not to know how lonely a one it is; and that few care to walk in it. Still we venture to hope and to pray that God will give our book, written in his name, and for his glory, a measure of success. Farewell reader! and forget us not in our loneliness and our solitude.

Hark! The bells are ringing; they come from the other side; the sound of them floats softly across the water. The country is not so far off as it appeared; that pleasant land—where the good of our world have dwelt of yore, and where they hope soon to dwell again—amid skies always clear, and fields always green; where the ‘noontide of glory eternally reigns.’

“Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.”

THE END.

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